

STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY

Punjab Through the Ages

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VOLUME 3

Editors

S.R. BAKSHI • RASHMI PATHAK

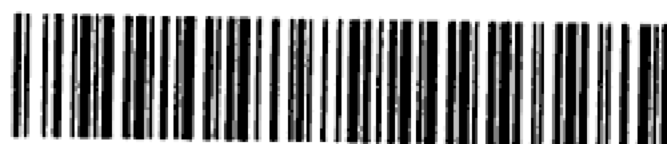
The Indian sub-continent, particularly the North-Western regions including the Punjab, had to face most arduous and difficult situations from time to time. Indeed the affluence of the people of this region was the main target of foreigners. But they were given a bold resistance through the ages. The four volumes deal with various significant phases of the rulers, people and their capabilities which in fact paid them rich dividends. The available material has been properly utilised in all these volumes.

Hopefully, these volumes will be useful study for students, researchers and teachers in all academic institutions in our country and abroad.

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STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN HISTORY

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Volume – 3

Editors

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Preface

The Punjab had been the victim of foreign onslaughts from the North-Western regions of Indian sub-continent. The main aim of these invasion was to take advantage of the riches of the people as well as to establish their administration here. But it goes to the credit of the bravery and fearlessness of the people of Punjab that they checkmated these onslaughts and did not allow to tarnish the name of their ancestors. Their bravery indeed has been dealt with in a comprehensive way. Particularly, the role of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is highly appreciable. Thus the Punjab and its people did not lay behind in their acts of administrative capability.

The Punjab Through the Ages have been evaluated into four volumes with comprehensive contents. These volumes deal with the Punjab and NWFP, the historical notes, the land and the people, religions, the clergy, life of Guru Nanak Dev, the misls in various regions of the North-West of the Punjab, military administration, socio-cultural movements in the region, prominent chiefs of the Punjab, Tipu Sultan and his defeat, annexations and political readjustments.

The second volume has surveyed the administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who ruled over Punjab and the adjoining regions for about four decades, the themes covered are the prevailing political condition, ancestors of the Maharaja, emergence of Ranjit Singh at a fairly young age, British interference, the Anglo-Sikh relations, conquests and annexations, consolidation of Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar, the Anglo-Sikhs war and Maharaja Dalip Singh.

The third volume deals with various significant phases of the freedom movement having deep bearing on Punjab and the participation of important persons. The theme commences with the

firing in Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar and ends with the attainment of Independence. Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and other have been highlighted.

The volume four has deep bearing on disturbances, Lord William Bentinck and his administration, era of Lord Dulhousie, Sardar Ajit Singh, socio-cultural movements in the Punjab, rights and duties of human beings, ethics, Guru Granth Sahib and Gems from the Sikh Scriptures.

The theme indeed has been well-knit into fifteen chapters based on the available material from various academic institutions.

All these volumes have been dealt with from various angles, viz, political, social, economic, regional etc. Hopefully, they explain the most significant phases of the Punjab through the ages.

We have collected the material from several academic institutions, viz the Sapru House Library, Indian Council of Historical Research Library, Delhi University Library, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Jamia Millia Islamia Library and Jawaharlal Nehru University Library and we are thankful to the members of these institutions for their kind support during our researches. We have also collected the material from some of the published works of eminent authors in order to fill up the gaps in these volumes. We indeed feel much beholden to these scholars.

Editors

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1

Introduction

The land of the Punjab stretching from Delhi to the borders of the North-West Frontier Province, with its alluvial soil irrigated by its prominent rivers and a network of canal system, had been the centre of numerous social, cultural, religious and political organizations. By a consistent flow of violent onslaughts on its land by the ambitious foreign rulers a spirit of fearlessness, determination and sacrifice had been generated amongst the brave people of this province. With the establishment of the British rule in the Punjab in a couple of years after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the *anti-Raj* feeling did not die down, rather it was utilised, at one time or the other, to make their nation free from the foreign yoke. The kind of model presented by the Kuka Movement; participation of prominent leaders in the freedom struggle under the banner of the Indian National Congress; the agitation and resentment in the canal-irrigated zone of the province and last but not the least, the patriotic role played by the *Ghadr* party[1] had a most significant impact on the thinking of the people who had begun questioning the role of the *Raj* in terms of the benefits enjoyed by the people of India in services or otherwise.

The patriotic activities of the *Ghadr* party had inculcated much awakening amongst the people of the Punjab[2] Initially the initiative in this regard was taken by Lala Har Dayal and Bhai Parmanand who were responsible for imparting political education to Indians living in Vancouver and San Francisco. A committee was formed to collect money and run the paper *Ghadr* in Urdu and Punjabi. It soon became the spokesman of a sizable section of Indian society. In one of its issues, it stated, 'Today there begins in foreign lands, but in our country's language, war against the English *Raj*. What is our name? Mutiny! *Ghadr* means mutiny. What is our work? Mutiny! Where will mutiny break out? In India...The time is coming soon when rifles and blood

will take the place of pen and ink. Brave men and worthy sons of India! Be ready with bullets and shots. Soon the fate of the tyrant will be decided and days of happiness and glory will dawn in India'.

It is thus evident that the *Ghadr* party had a revolutionary programme which had the following main objects in view, *viz.* to seduce Indian troops; to murder loyal subjects and officials to loot government treasury; to propagate through distribution of seditious literature; to commit dacoities; to procure arms and ammunition; to manufacture bombs, hand-grenades and other weapons; to establish secret societies which were to carry on anti-*Raj* propaganda; to loot police stations; to destroy railways, telegraph offices and other government establishments and, last but not the least, to mobilise the people living in the villages.

The fate of *Komagata Maru* and the oppression and repression its passengers had to bear were most tragic. On landing on the seashores of India, some of them were shot dead and a few of them were arrested and convicted. Those who could escape the fury of this repression made themselves busy in carrying on their revolutionary activities between 1914-15. A comprehensive effort was made to provoke mutiny among the Indian troops. Seditious pamphlets were systematically circulated and their emissaries secretly paid visits to some of the important cantonments in upper India. In Meerut, their activities were widely spread: bombs were taken to the cantonment area in order to kill European officers. In other areas, thirty-three violent activities including five murders were committed by members of the organization.[3]

The repressive measures of the government surpassed all limits. Their haunts and rendezous were raided by numerous police parties, thoroughly searched and the party members were arrested. The punishments awarded to them were very severe, from deportation to hanging. On account of these stringent measures of the government combined with numerous other causes, the movement could not make much headway. But it left a significant impact on the people of the Punjab regarding the efficacy of the *Raj* and a feeling tinged with *anti-Raj* sentiments was imbibed amongst the uneducated peasantry which could be mobilized at a time when the province as a whole was to fight for a common cause at a later stage.

In the year 1914, the time of the commencement of the global war, the involvement of India as a subject-nation was unavoidable.[4] It became an essential function of each and every district, divisional and

provincial official to see that there was the maximum response from his region towards the war-efforts of the British government. Such a necessity was that of the mobilisation of economic resources and manpower. To implement this kind of scheme war-loans were raised in one shape or the other and the public in India was sounded for investments in the government funds. The response was visible amongst the sections of people who were economically well-off. Besides, the dire need to have physically fit, although less educated, even uneducated, young men arose and the *Raj* had its hopeful expectations from the youths of the Punjab to safeguard British interests at various war-fornts. Michael O'Dwyer,[5] the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab who was fully conversant with the courage, loyalty and physical prowess of a Punjabi soldier, called the Punjab, in a flattering tone, as the 'shield' and the 'sword band of India.'[6] 'He vigorously launched campaign at various levels to enlist recruits from various communities and in this task the response from the province was proverbial as it is clear from the table given below:[7]

Name of Province	*Number of Recruits*
North-West Frontier	32,000
Punjab	3,50,004
United Provinces	1,42,000
Bombay	35,000
Bengal	6,000
Bihar and Orissa	8,000
Madras	46,000
Central Provinces	5,000
Assam	1,000
Burma	13,000
Ajmer	8,000
Native States under Government of India	80,000

The Punjab Recruitment Board consisting of Popham Young as chairman and prominent non-officials like Umar Hayat Khan, Raghbir Singh, Gujjan Singh. Mehdi Shah and Lal Chand as members recommended conscription throughout India. These recommendations were strongly supported by Michael O'Dwyer, although the central board administered by the Government of India found it difficult to apply compulsion to the vast heterogeneous population of the country.[8]

This rejection of the board indeed was in no way an hindrance for the Punjab government to implement its scheme of conscription in a vigorous way. The scheme of recruitment was devised through various means. Recruiting *durbars* were held in the districts under the chairmanship of local British officials and prominent public men greatly assisted them in getting young men from schools, colleges and peasantry. Liberal rewards were granted to those who helped in this kind of recruitment.[9] According to Michael O'Dwyer, the Punjab was almost exhausted when the war came to an end. This was evident in August-September 1918 when a record number of young men over twenty-one thousands were enlisted in the army.[10] It has been estimated that 12,18,000 Indians and Gorkhas (including 7,91,000 combatants) were enlisted, and 14,57,000 (including 9,85,000 combatants) mobilized, during the First World War. The Punjab supplied about one-third of the Indian recruits and more than one-third of the total number who served. Of the combatants, both enlisted and mobilized, the Punjab supplied more than 40 per cent.[11]

The recruiting returns of the Multan district at the end of December 1917 stood at 759 or 1 in 586 of the male population. By the end of November 1918, the number rose to 4,636 or I in 93. Such a phenomenal record was possible only under severe methods of compulsion. The Commissioner of Multan Division stated, 'I am afraid with a few exceptions, the leading men in the district have not done their duty. Instead of enlisting members of their own families, they tried to buy or coerce men of lower stratum;' objectionable methods of coercion were resorted to by some headmen with the result that in some cases public tranquility was disturbed'. The Commissioner of Ambala Division reported that, 'In order to make up the quota, the people resorted to the expedient of subscribing large sums to be given to young men to enlist, 500 or 1000 Rupees being the price of a recruit.'

'*Lambardars* had to furnish recruits on the penalty of forfeiting the *Lambardari* rights. Several were actually dismissed. Thus the value of recruit goes to Rs. 500 Police sent up people to be bound down for keeping peace. Magistrates refused bail and sent them to the lock up, till they agreed to furnish recruits, Criminal prosecution was withdrawn on the accused agreeing to offer himself as recruit'.

During the war, a number of Indian banks went bankrupt and this bankruptcy dealt a serious blow to numerous enterprises of the commercial houses, by affecting their capacity of production. 'This

phenomenon was essentially a result of the colonial character of the economic structure in India, and of the lack of support for Indian banking capital from the state and the powerful British banks established in that country... An enormous amount of food, agricultural and industrial raw materials, a large part of the output of the mining and metallurgical industries were exported, thus making it difficult to expand internal production. The British treasury attempted to cut down on its colossal war-time expenses by increasing the demands it made upon the ordinary Indian taxpayer. Not only the masses, but also the propertied classes in India suffered as a result of the policy. The financial and currency machinations of the colonial authorities and British businessmen gave rise to inflation (in 1914-18 the overall total of currency notes in circulation nearby tripled) and to sharp rises in silver prices. Disruption of India's foreign trade links led to a sharp drop in the country's exports and imports. All this had a negative effect upon the country's economic position'.[12]

'Besides the prices of staple foods and produce were affected by all sorts of considerations, mostly inevitable. The autumn crop of 1914 was good, but the declaration of war sufficed to send prices up, especially in the case of sugar. Cotton, however, suffered a severe slump, and was a 'drug,[13] in the market that winter....' This kind of economic phenomenon had immediately affected the middle classes and people with limited means. People with fixed moderate incomes were most hardhit in this direction and among them were the subordinate railway officials who were, therefore, discontented.'

When Lord Chelmsford took over as Viceroy of India in April 1916, the home government gave a serious thought over the recasting of the whole machinery which might prove more helpful in the management of war which was already about two years old.[14] It was felt that if the Indian Empire as a whole was to contribute a substantial share in the war, the organisation generally, and in particular that part of it engaged in rising manpower, must be recast in order to utilise the whole machinery and influence of the civil machinery as was then being done in Great Britain. In the autumn of the same year, when General Charles Munro who succeeded Beauchamp Duff as Commander-in-Chief pressed the same kind of opinion it was readily accepted by the Government of India.[15] This decision was welcomed by the Punjab government. At the Viceroy's instance, the Lieutenant-Governor prepared a memorandum which showed how the military and civil

machinery could be coordinated, giving instances of the evil results which had followed from the lack of such cooperation and of the failure of the military authorities to adapt their system, suitable enough for peace-time, to the new conditions created by the war.

'From February 1917, in the Punjab and from June 1919 in the other provinces, the civil administration was directly associated with military in the task of providing men and munitions; the recruiting organisation was rapidly expanded by the appointment of experienced civilians, official and non-official, with a knowledge of the people, as assistant to the military recruiting officers; Indian officials or non-official of influence were employed on recruiting work in nearly every district; the territorial system of recruitment by which suitable men of every class could be enrolled in nearly every district was substituted for the old class system under which there were only four recruiting centres, Rawalpindi for Mohammedans; Amritsar for Sikhs, Jullundur for Dogras, Delhi for Jats: while in the more backward districts, unaccustomed to military service, local depots were established for the training of the young recruits near their homes. Above all, assistance in raising men for the Army was made a duty of all executive and village officials and of all who were enjoying grants of land or other marks of consideration from government, and one of the main qualifications in establishing claims on government.[16] In each district, a War League or Recruiting Board was formed with Deputy Commissioner as president, a few leading officials and a large number of influential non-officials as members, to help in distributing and raising the quota proposed for the district'.[17]

Besides the people of the Punjab were put to numerous hazards in their economic and social life. Such hazards were quite glaring in the curtailment of facilities of travelling and of import and export of merchandise in the province. Nature too proved very cruel to the people. The heavy rains in the autumn of 1917 had caused the worst, outbreak of malaria since 1908. The death-toll was very heavy, and an enormous number of young men escaped only with their 'spleens so enlarged that they were rendered unfit for the army'. These misfortunes were utterly eclipsed by the terrible scourge of influenza which raged throughout the Punjab for about three months preceding the armistice. 'The people died like flies, the villages were harder hit than the towns, the men than women, and those in the prime of life worst of all. Whole families were wiped out by the dozens; the losses in most districts ran into tens of thousands. Altogether more than a million died in the Province,

including the Indian States. Of these, more than two lakhs were men of military age.'[18]

The new Income-tax Act and the more searching methods of enquiry in relation thereto as well as the interference with trade conditions had made the trading community restless. A circular was issued by the Punjab government making suggestions for obtaining contributions which could only be given effect to, by using more than normal pressure. A part of the circular may be stated here, 'I am to suggest that Deputy Commissioners might assist in the campaign by estimating the contributions that might reasonably be expected from the various towns. In doing so they will derive such assistance from the local tax returns, especially where the assessments have recently been revised by the special establishment. Income tax returns furnish, too, a fairly reliable index to the relative financial condition of individuals who were expected to help the loan and a rough standard, which it is believed is already being applied in some districts. To judge of the adequacy of their investments in it, it would not be unreasonable to expect that on an average an assessee would be in a position to invest in the War Loan from half to one-fourth of the income on which he is actually assessed. Applying this rough test or others which may be found suitable to local conditions, Deputy Commissioners should be in a position to see whether towns and villages or individuals in their jurisdiction are doing what is expected of them?

'The Deputy Commissioner should then, by special meetings, formation of local committee of *Sahukars* and such expedients, endeavour to obtain the estimated sum as a minimum contribution. Local committees of traders and others presided over in large towns by Judicial Officers. Extra Assistant Commissioner or Tahsildars, will probably be able to effect a satisfactory distribution of the loan demand. Rivalry between towns and communities might be promoted by periodical publication and comparison of the amounts subscribed. Help might be afforded by a promise to recognise liberal subscriptions by *Sanads*, by a grant of Chairs, and by the gift of Special certificates. On the other hand, it should be made clear to wealthy citizens that failure to do their duty in this matter will be taken into account in nominations to Municipal and notified area committees, in appointments of honorary magistrates and in any other forms of government recognition, on the ground that such honours reserved for those who have shown in a practical form their desire to assist the administration'.[19]

Besides, judicial processes were pressed into service. 'The first class magistrate at Chakwal discharged an accused in a criminal case No: 82 of 1917 noting that the accused and his brother have between them subscribed Rs 110 towards 'Our Day Fund', and according to verbal compromise made, accused is accordingly acquitted'. Mehar Singh, son of Daulat Singh applied for remission of income tax in case No. 36 of 1917 in the same court. The magistrate in dismissing the application remarked among other things, 'owing to the war, the profit of the mules is immense, but the objector has not contributed a pice to any war fund or any war loan. He had also a son whom he would not enlist'.[20]

At Leibia, in the district of Muzaffargarh, a large crowd besieged the residence of the Naib Tahsildar, assaulted his peon and a policeman. Some persons were arrested and were tried under Section 147 of the Indian Penal Code. On appeal, the judge remarked that 'the people had real grievances for which they wanted to find expression. It is a matter of common knowledge that the efforts of the subordinate officials in Muzaffargarh to raise the war loan and to find recruits, owing to the methods adopted by *Zaildars* and *Lambardars* on whom pressure was brought to help in the matter, led to severe frictions in many places. It must be admitted too that these methods were frequently unauthorised, objectionable, oppressive, and opposed to the intentions of the government. In remote tracts, they were found intolerable by the people. These acts could not, of course, be proved by the prosecution, and it would be absurd to expect proof of them to be adduced in defence in a case of the present kind. It is necessary in the cause of justice to make this clear, even if in doing so I have to get outside the judicial record.'[21]

Besides, many important cities and towns of the Punjab, *viz.*, Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Kasur, Akalgarh, Hafizabad, Patti and Khem Karan came under the special income tax scheme of the government and this increase was very large, ranging from 100 into 200 per cent.[22] The seizure of wheat-stocks under the Defence of India Act to stop speculation and reduce the price of grain to the poor was also disliked by the traders affected thereby.[23]

The unrest spread like wild fire in the rural areas where peasantry had numerous grievances against the policy of the government. The apathy of the governmental policy towards them and the utter neglect of their basic needs had greatly agitated their minds. They indeed had

lost all hopes of their future progress, if any, from the functioning of the alien government.

At this point of time Gandhi stated: Tales of rank injustice and oppression came during in daily from the Punjab, but all I could do was to sit helplessly by and quash my teeth.'[24] Indeed the emergency of Gandhi on the political scene of India afforded a new kind of awakening to the Indian masses who needed a leader with a firm resolve and determination to lead them and show them the way towards the cherished goal.[25] With the sudden demise of two political stalwarts. Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta in 1915, the moderates were in a state of depression. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, after his release, was not in the main stream of the Indian National Congress. He was constantly shadowed by the intelligence department. Even bureaucracy was his sworn enemy.

Gandhi thought it as an act of far-sightedness not to embarrass the British government during the war. Probably, by doing so, he wished to demonstrate that he was no opportunist, taking advantage of the critical situation of the time. But he, however, gave vent to his feelings thus:[26] 'I feel sure that nothing less than a definite vision of Home Rule to be realised in the shortest possible time will satisfy the Indian people. Ours is a peculiar position. We are today outside the partnership. Ours is a consecration based on the hope of a better future. I should be untrue to you and to my country if I do not clearly and unequivocally tell you what that hope is? I do not bargain for its fulfilment, but you should know disappointment of hope means disillusion.'

The year 1916 was unique in the history of Indian nationalism in numerous ways. Whereas, it led to the foundation of two Home Rule Leagues with the same kinds of political programme, it bought all kinds of political differences and controversies to an end and set the stage in a smooth way for the emancipation of India.[27] This kind of model brought about Hidu-Muslim unity and formulated a mutually agreed conjoint scheme of self-government for the country to be placed before the government. No less significant was the reunion of the two wings of the Indian National Congress which had separated at Surat about nine years ago. The leadership of the Congress followed up the scheme of self-government by a resolution calling upon its various committees and other organised bodies and associations to carry on propaganda campaign in its favour throughout the country and educate public opinion on the issue.

The commencement of year 1917witnessed a quickening of national consciousness all over the country and a widely popular agitation in favour of self-government. As prominent leaders of the Home Rule Movement, Tilak and Annie Besant did marvellous work and gained much prominence in politics in a short time. Tilak exhorted the people to insist on the demand of their rights: 'India is your own house. Our domestic affairs must be in our own hands. Freedom is my birthright. So long as it is awake within me, I am not old. No weapon can cut this spirit, no fire can burn it, no wind can dry it... We ask for Home Rule and we must get it.[28]

The provincial leaders of all schools of thought like Motilal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.R. Das, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, M.A. Jinnah, Bhulabhai Desai, M.R. Jayakar and others joined the Home Rule League to spite the British government. When Annie Basant was served with the order of internment by the Governor of Madras in 1917, there was angry uproar and much excitement against the order, and her movement progressed in a geometrical progression.[29]

These unexpected political developments opened the eyes of the British statesmen to the realities of the prevailing situation which created an unfavourable atmosphere not congenial for the smooth and proper functioning of the governmental machinery at various levels. The Hindu-Muslim concord, the Lucknow Pact, the reunion of the moderates and the extremists and the intensive and extensive propaganda for Home Rule could not be ignored, rather they were taken up with all seriousness. Austin Chamberlain suggested to the British cabinet to take practical steps to meet the powerful and increasing demand of the united India for greater share of its people in the administration of the country, but cautioned against making the constitutional changes appear as rewards for services rendered by India in the war.

With the approval of the war cabinet[30] headed by Lloyd George, E.S. Montague, the Secretary of State for India, made an historical declaration on 20 August 1917: 'The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire...I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom

the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people, must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the cooperation received from those upon whom new opportunities of services will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.'[31]

The conclusion of the First World War had also brought forward the complex and ticklish problems emanating from the terms on which peace was to be concluded with Turkey, a dismembered empire by the Allied Powers. The Muslims in India became much apprehensive and unhappy with the policy of the British government over the question of *Khilafat* which had deep religious sanctity for them and touched upon their sentiments when the treatment of the British government with the Caliph and his territories were explained and discussed both by the Muslim and Hindu leadership.

During the year 1918, the tension between the government and prominent leaders of the Congress grew mainly due to their speeches and tours in various regions. Early in 1918, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal were prohibited from entering Delhi and the Punjab. The Punjab government felt panicky about the outbreak of an organised rebellion by the people and this state of panic was greatly responsible for the inhuman brutalities committed by the government later.[32]

The Secretary of State who was indeed very meticulous in maintaining a diary with day today record happened to come to India after about three months of his announcement and toured a major portion of the country in a period of six months till he left for England in May 1918. He recorded thus: 'My visit to India means that were are going to do something big. I cannot go home and produce a little thing or nothing, it must be epoch—making or it is a failure, it must be the keynote of the future history of India'.[33]

Undoubtedly, India had nobly supported the Empire in its war against Germany. Its teeming millions had contributed to the war effort in both money and men and for the common cause they had endured the hardships of food scarcity, rising prices, increased taxation, the restriction of press freedom and the curtailment of personal liberty without complaint. They had been stricken by severe famine on the failure of the monsoon in 1918 and had suffered terrible mortality from the world-wide influenza epidemic of that year. The armistice found

them restless and excited. They were stirred by the new spirit of personal freedom and national liberty brought to the surface throughout the world by war. They were intoxicated by the new conception of the self-determination of peoples voiced by President Wilson of the United States, and agitated by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 which they saw as the triumph of the oppressed. The people of India, goaded by the ferment of the time, thought that a new dawn was breaking. Reforms had been promised by the Imperial Government, their goals, Home Rule, by successive stages. Great expectations had been raised. The people of India felt that they had proved their right to be treated as an equal members of the Empire.

'The White Sahibs, who had governed India since the days of the Mutiny when the rule of the East India Company had been ended, failed to understand the strength of Indian hopes of self-government'.[34]

Jawaharlal Nehru recorded in his *Autobiography* thus:

'The end of the World War found India in a state of suppressed excitement. Industrialisation had spread and the capitalist class had grown in wealth and power. This handful at the top had prospered and were greedy for more power and opportunity to invest their savings and add to their wealth. The great majority, however, were not so fortunate and looked forward to a lightening of the burdens that crushed them'.[35]

Michael O'Dwyer was a firm believer in strong-arm methods and made no secret of his views for political reforms demanded by the Congress leadership. He gave a severe warning to the press which was followed by action under the Press Act. Security was demanded and forfeited in a number of cases. He even prevented the entry of newspapers like *New India, Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *Independent* into the Punjab, Annie Besant wrote, 'The harsh oppressive rule of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, his press-gang methods of recruitment, his forced war-loans and his cruel persecution of all political leaders kept the covered-up embers of resentment alive and ready to break into flame'.

'The attitude of the Government of India and the British non-official community had greatly hardened against the more radical section of the Congress since the Partition of Bengal. The Government tended to identify the extremists with the terrorists. But stern coercive measures instead of curbing the terrorists had the effect of sending them underground inside India and promoting armed intervention from abroad.'[36]

The administration of the Punjab government under Michael O'Dwyer had for various reasons come to be regarded by the educated and politically-minded classes as opposed to their patriotic and nationalist sentiments and aspirations. Moreover, during his term of office orders had been issued prohibiting prominent politicians from entering the Punjab and reports of the proceedings of certain meetings had been prohibited publication unless they had been censored. He had objected to Tej Bahadur Sapru and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya being invited to attend the conference that was held at Lahore to support the reforms proposals of the nineteen members of the Indian Legislative Council. The Defence of India Act was passed as an emergency measure to cope with revolutionary outbreaks that were feared during the war. "It is possible to understand the use of such powers when all available fighting material had been removed from India to the battlefields of France and Mesopotamia, and when India' internal peace had to depend largely upon the loyalty and the peace living nature of the people. Extraordinary powers taken by the Executive, like martial law, enable one policeman to do the work of perhaps four, but this is done at the cost of the liberty of the subject, by depriving him of all the wholesome checks which regulate police producer. When, therefore, the hostilities ceased, the people had looked forward to the repeal of the Defence of India Act. They had done so the more because, in spite of the declarations made by the government that the measure would be used only in case of real necessity and never for the purpose of stifling political agitation or hindering the movements of public men, it was used for the purpose of restraining political freedom. To mention no other case it was used in order to intern Mrs. Besant and her associates because they represented in its intense form the Indian Home Rule Movement. In it, there never was any suspicion of violence entertained even by her worst enemies. The public had, therefore, grown thoroughly distrustful of the government, and had hoped that in view of India's unique war record, and the declaration of August 1917 foreshadowing reforms leading to responsible government, that Act would be repealed and that the people would have respite from the unwelcome attentions of the Secret Service Department.'

Thus Michael O'Dwyer galvanized the Punjab into life and made the Punjabis feel akin in a manner, they had never done before. He made a 'supreme effort' to crush the spirit of the people that was struggling with all sincerity to be free from the thraldom under which he had bound

it under his rule. He scented danger in every honest and patriotic speech made by the leaders and he detected conspiracy in every kind of gathering, association and combination. By the application of illegal and harsh methods to silence the feelings of the people, he instead invited violence from them so that he might justify the use of force to crush them through the agency of civilian bureaucracy at tahsil, district and divisional levels as well as with the support of the loyal and picked officials of the defence services. This kind of policy, however, succeeded as a temporary phase to establish law and order in various areas, but its aftermath effects reached such a climax that it became difficult for the British government to have a firm grip over the political situation engineered and led by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi who was instrumental in having a huge following within the Congress fold throughout India and managing the mass support for the first Non-Cooperation Movement launched in 1920.

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2

Rowlatt Bills

When the First World War ended, the people were looking forward to the repeal of the Defence of India Act. They had begun to detest this Act, because contrary to the government's declaration, it was used by Michael O'Dwyer to punish people of the Punjab and suppress their political aspirations. Indeed, there had been a promise by the British government in August 1917 of advance towards responsible government and people had begun hoping that the Defence of India Act would soon be repealed and they would have some respite from the 'unwelcome and unwanted' attentions of the secret services department.

The Rowlatt Bills came as surprise as they were sprung upon an indignant, angry and dissatisfied people. These Bills take their popular name from the president of the Sedition Committee. This committee was appointed by the Government of India on 10 December 1917 with Mr. Justice Rowlatt as president to report on what were termed as 'criminal conspiracies connected with revolutionary movements in India', and advise about legislation to deal with them. The Committee was required to sit in camera. Its report was presented on 15 April 1918.

The Committee prepared a fairly detailed account of the organization and doings of young revolutionaries operating in different regions of India. This was done mainly on the basis of material supplied by the Government of India. After a comprehensive survey of the existing political situation, the committee recommended special legislation which sought to curtail the liberty and legal rights of the people in a manner very drastic in nature. Consequently, two Bill were prepared on the basis of these recommendations. The one that actually passed into law, was the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act 1919. It made provision for speedy trial of offences by a special Court, consisting of three High Court judges. There could be no appeal against

decisions of this court and the provincial government was empowered to search a place and arrest a suspected person without warrant and keep him in confinement at any place in the country.

The public had no knowledge of the nature of the evidence given before the committee or even the names of those who gave it. The witnesses were not cross-examined on behalf of the people who were unrepresented. In spite of the passionate protest, the Bill was rushed through, and during all the crucial stages of the voting, no Indian member of the Legislative Council voted in any manner in its favour expect one member of the Executive Council and he, too, was to resign soon afterwards after having witnessed the consequences in Punjab. The Bill was finally passed on 18 March 1918, and three important members of the Imperial Legislative Council, M.M. Malaviya, M.A. Jinnah and Mazarul Haque resigned.

Jinnah, the chairman of the Muslim League, warned the government in his speech in the assembly, 'I do not wish to state it by way of threat or intimidation to government, but I wish to state it because it is my duty to tell you that, if these measures are passed, you will create in the country from one end to the other a discontent and agitation, the like of which you have not witnessed, and it will have, believe me a most disastrous effect on the good relations that have existed between the government and people.'[1] In his letter of resignation to the Viceroy, he stated: "The Government of India and your Excellency have thought it fit to place on the Statute Book a measure admittedly obnoxious and decidedly coercive at a time of peace and thereby substituted the Executive for the Judicial. Besides, by passing this Bill Your Excellency's government have actively negatived every argument they advanced but a year ago, when they appealed to India for help at the War Conference and ruthlessly trampled upon the principles for which Great Britain avowedly fought the war. The fundamental principles of justice have been uprooted and the constitutional rights of the people have been violated at a time when there is no real danger to the state...In my opinion a government that passes or sanctions such a law in times of peace forfeits its claim to be called a civilized government.'[2]

The Bill was strenuously opposed throughout the country by Indians of all shades of opinion. As could be anticipated, the Bill was criticised in numerous public meetings. The significant point of criticism was that the British government did not care to realize the true import of the situation from the point of view of nationalist India.

P.E. Richards in his work on *Indian Dust* mentioned thus on 14 April 1919; "Lahore is in the possession of armed police and British troops. Women and children have been ordered to leave the Hill stations....The colleges have joined in the strike....At all the important points were British Khaki and machineguns.'[3]

Several Indian newspapers levelled severe criticism against this Bill. *The Bombay Chronicle* called it as 'repression in excelsis'.[4] The *Hindu* wrote, '...the Indian public would read the proposed provisions with shame, indignation and disgust.'[5] The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* called it a 'gigantic blunder which would arose the worst passions of a peaceful law-abiding people.'[6] The *Panjabee* regarded it as 'a barefaced attempt on the part of a bureaucracy which has been demoralised by the exercise of unrestrained power to interfere with liberty.'[7] The *New India* described it as 'monstrous'.[8]

The speedy trials were to be conducted without any kind of commitment and with no right to appeal. They could take place *in camera.* Besides, the relevant provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code and the Evidence Act were suspended for purposes of this legislation. The preventive powers were conferred on the authorities; this included the taking of security from ordinary people, and the insistence on their giving an undertaking that they would not commit a scheduled offence, that they would not change residence without notice, and that they would report to the nearest police station from time to time. The authorities were given power to use all means to enforce compliance. The people affected would have no right to counsel in their leadings. In short, as the Congress Enquiry Report said, 'The Act created licentious conditions of judicial administration'. The Report added that the provisions for arrest without warrant and confinement under all sorts of conditions meant orgainsed terror and disorder, Martial law without the name. There were indeed shouts everywhere, *'No Appeal, No Dalil, No Vakil'.*

'One could ask why this was at all necessary. Did not Government have in its possession all the law that was required—the Defence of India Act, the Press Act, the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act and the time-worn 1818 Regulations?...The only purpose that the appointment of the committee severed was to provoke and exasperate the people. They saw in it the beginning of another era of repression. It was as if Government wished to forestall any feeling of exultation among the people as a result of the Parliamentary Declaration of 20th

August. It was a warning that more diabolical weapons were being sharpened for the chastisement of the socalled sedition-mongers. Once again the bureaucracy had successfully queered the pitch for any peaceful progress'.[9]

On 8 February 1919, Gandhi informed Madan Mohan Malaviya of his reaction about the Rowlatt Bills. 'The Viceroy's speech is disappointing. Under the circumstances I, at any rate, hope that all the Indian members will have the Select Committee or, if necessary, even the Council, and launch a countrywide agitation. You and other members have said that if the Rowlatt Bills are passed a massive agitation would be launched the like of which has not been seen in India....I have not yet fully decided but I feel that when the government bring in an obnoxious law the people will be entitled to defy their other laws as well. If we do not show the strength of the people, even the reforms we are to get will be useless. In my opinion you should all make it clear to the government that so long as the Rowlatt Bills are there you will pay no taxes and will advise the people also not to pay them. I know that to give such advice is to assume a great responsibility. But unless we do something really big they will not feel any respect for us. And we cannot hope to get anything from people who do not respect us.'[10]

The next day, Gandhi communicated to V.S. Srinivasa Sastri that he could no longer watch the progress of the Rowlatt Bills as they were the aggravated symptoms of the deep-seated disease. For him, they were a striking demonstration of the determination of the council service 'to retain its grip of our necks.' He considered the Bills to be an open challenge to us and if 'we succumb we are done for.' He clarified, 'When petitions and resolutions of gigantic mass meetings fail, there are but two courses open—the ordinary rough and ready course is an armed rebellion, and the second is civil disobedience to all the laws of the land or to a selection of them. If the Bills were but a stray example of lapse of righteousness and justice, I should not mind then but when they are clearly an evidence of a determined policy of repression, civil disobedience seems to be a duty imposed upon every lover of personal and public liberty.' Gandhi felt sure that the resignations of Indian members would shake the British government's confidence in its ability to disregard public sentiment and thus would be an education of immense value to the people of India.'[11]

J.B. Kripalani reacted thus:

'It was during these days that the World War ended. The allies were victorious. However, there was no evidence of any change in Britain's attitude towards India. In fact, it looked as though with the end of their pre-occupation with the war, they had decided to turn their attention to the danger of an awakened India. The Defence of India Act was still on the statute book. Even then the Rowlatt Committee was appointed to enquire into the nature of Indian unrest and suggest measures to meet its threat to the empire.[12]

'But events were moving fast. Harrowing reports of the wanton violence that the government was using on peaceful demonstrators were pouring in from all parts of the country, more especially from the Punjab. The repression evoked further demonstrations. In some places, these took a violent turn. Some British and Indian officers were killed. There were reports of rioting in Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat and in the Punjab. Gandhiji rushed to Ahmedabad. When he learned that his followers, who had pledged themselves to non-violence, had yielded to the provocation given by the authorities, he was greatly distressed. Satyagraha required strict adherence to non-violence even under the severest provocation. Gandhiji felt that people had not grasped the full meaning of his message. They were not yet ready to use the new weapon of non-violence. He, therefore, called off the movement and admitted that he had made 'a Himalayan miscalculation' inasmuch as he had overrated the patience of the people and their capacity for disciplined action.'[13]

Srinivasa Sastri remarked, 'A bad law once passed is not always used against the bad.... In times of panic caused, it may be, by very slight incidents, I have known governments lose their heads. I have known a reign of terror being brought about; I have known the best, the noblest Indians, the highest characters amongst us, brought under suspicion, standing in hourly dread of the visitations of the Criminal Investigation Department....When government undertakes a repressive policy, the innocent are not safe. Men like me would not be considered innocent. The innocent then is he who foreswears politics, who takes no part in the public movements of the times; who retires into his house, mumbles his prayers, pays his taxes, and *salams* all the government officials all round. The man who interferes in politics, the man who goes about collecting money for any public purpose, the man who addresses a public meeting, then becomes a suspect....You may enlarge your councils, you

may advise wide electorates, but the men that will then fill your councils will be toadies, timid men and the bureaucracy, armed with these repressive powers, will reign unchecked under the outward forms of a democratic government. Well, we are all anxious to punish the wicked. None of us desire that wickedness should go unpunished but...even the wicked must be punished in certain ways. When Skeffington was shot, I remember the whole world was shocked.... Now in war, when all humanity throbs with excitement and peril, and nobody thinks of anything except how to conquer the enemy, even then, my Lord, there are criminals abroad in a country, there are certain ways in which they ought to be brought to book. You ought not to lay them by the heels and punish them in ways that will shock the sense of justice; in ways that will make the innocent feel that there is no law in the land; in ways that will make honest, virtuous and public spirited work impossible. The price even for the extinction of wickedness that is demanded then is far too high.... Much better that a few rascals should walk abroad, than that the honest man should be obliged for fear of the law of the land to remain shut up in his house, to refrain from the activities which it is in his nature to indulge in, to abstain from all political and public work merely because there is a dreadful law in the land.'

Sastri was not in agreement with William Vincent's dictum that the aim of the Bill, he was incharge of, was not 'the suppression but the purification of politics'. He remarked.... 'The history of legislation, both social and political, is strewn with instances of miscarriage of excellent intentions. Laws intended to cure poverty have aggravated it.... You cannot place on the Statute Book such drastic legislation without putting into the hands of over enthusiastic executive officers what I consider shortcuts to administrative peace.... The tragic story of India may be summed up in these words, that you have governed all these centuries in India in isolation, without having any responsible section of public opinion behind you.... No section of public opinion supports you. The nominated members have not given their blessing to this Bill. The Zamindar members have not given their blessing. The lawyer members will have none of it. The members of commerce will have none of it....'

'....I do not think the Hon'ble the Law Member could have meant all that he said that some of us were indulging in threats of agitation. I venture to think that no one here who has spoken against the Bill indulged in anything which might truthfully be described as a threat of

agitation. None of us, certainly none of the Moderates, I take leave to say, have power to go and stir up a violent agitation in the country. It is impossible. Agitation must be there already. The heart must be throbbing, if any words that we use here can have a possible effect on the general political atmosphere. The agitation is there. I wish to assure my official colleagues that none of us has a share yet in this business, but, if our appeals fall flat, if the Bill goes through, I do not believe there is any one who would be doing his duty if he did not join the agitation.'

In spite, however, of the serious protest, the motion that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, was carried, and the amendment, that its consideration be deferred till six months after the term of office of the Legislative Council, was defeated on 6 February 1919; 22 voted for the amendment and 35 against it.

Ayes—22

Gangadhar Chitnavis, S.N. Banerjea, Raja of Mahmudabad, Taj Bahadur Sapru, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Srinivasa Sastri, B.N. Sharma, Mir Asad Ali, V.J. Patel, M.A. Jinnah, Fazulbhoy Currimbhoy, Sitanath Ray, Rampal Singh, Krishna Sahay, Raja of Kanika, Mazharul Haque, Mian Muhammad Shafi, Zulfikar Ali Khan, G.S. Khaparde, B.D. Shukul, K.K. Chanda, and Maung Bah Too.

Noes—35

H.E. the Commander-in-Chief of India, Claude Hill, Sankaran Nair, George Lawndes, William Vincent, James Meston, Arthur Anderson, W.A. Ironside, Verney Lovett, H.F. Howard, James Du Boulay, A.H. Ley, H. Sharp, R.A. Mant, Alfred Bingley, Godfrey Fell, F.C. Rose, C.H. Kesteve, D. De S. Bray, R.E. Holland, W.R. Edwards, G.R. Clarke, A.P. Muddiman, C.A. Barron, P.L. Moore, M.N. Hogg, T. Emerson, E.H.C. Walsh, C.A. Kincaid, John Donald, P.J. Fagan, J.T. Marten, W.J. Reid, W.F. Pice and H. Moncrieff Smith.

Jawaharlal Nehru opined thus: 'It was proposed in the initial stages that this Act, when passed, was to be a permanent measure, but an amendment was accepted in the select committee limiting its continuance to three years from the termination of the war...the British Government, in the teeth of unanimous public opinion, pushed through a law which they themselves never used afterwards, and thus invited an upheaval. One might almost think that the object of the measure was to bring trouble'.[14]

The passage of the Rowlatt Bills in the final shape of an Act raised a storm and a huge and massive opposition unprecedented in the history of India. 'The crime of the government became complete when they persisted in it in the face of unanimous popular opposition. The government were wholly unjustified in placing on the Statute Book, on the even of liberal reforms, an extraordinary measure to deal with anarchy, as if anarchy had been endemic instead of being rare in India.' Whatever, the object of the Rowlatt Bills, the provisions were so drastic that the people of India began to feel that their freedom was in peril.

The response to Gandhi's call for Satyagraha was spontaneous and phenomenal. His message for the people of India reached the four corners of the country even though the Congress organisation had not become so strong and widespread. On 24 February, 1919, a *Satyagraha Pledge* [15] under the signatures of Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel, Chandulal Manilal Desai, Anasuyabai Sarabhai and others was issued as a protest against the Bills. 'Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No. I of 1919 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. II of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that, in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property.'[16]

On the same day, Gandhi sent a telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy on which he expressed his sentiments about the Rowlatt Bills. 'Ever since publication Rowlatt Bills have been considering my position regarding them, have been conferring with friends. In my opinion bad in themselves Bills are but symptom of deep-seated disease among the ruling class, coming as they do on even reforms Bills augur ill for their success. Those who have been associated with me in public work and other friends met today and after the greatest deliberation of such laws as committee to be formed from ourselves may decide. After Sir George Lowndes' speech it is necessary to demonstrate to government that even a Government the most autocratic finally owes its power to the will of the governed. Without recognition of this principle and consequently withdrawal of Bills many of us consider

reforms valueless. I wish to make an humble but strong appeal to His Excellency to reconsider Government's decision to proceed with Bills, and reluctantly add that in event of unfavourable reply the pledge must be published and the signatures must invite additions. I am aware of seriousness of the proposed step. It is, however, much better that people say openly what they think in their hearts and without fear of consequences enforce the dictates of their won conscience. May I expect early reply?'[17]

On 26 February, the Congress leadership issued instructions to the *satyagraha* volunteers to be carried on but them while seeking support of the people for the national cause. Volunteers were required to read and explain the *Satyagraha Pledge* to every intending signatory before taking his signature to the vow for the national cause. The pledge was in three parts. The first part laid down the aims and objects of the pledge. It declared that the signatories were of opinion that the Rowlatt Bills were unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals. In order to be able to make this statement one must fully understand the Rowlatt Bills, hence it was the duty of the volunteers to explain the Bills clearly to the intending signatory.[18]

The exact vow to be taken by the *satyagraha* volunteers formed the second part of the pledge. The signatory had to solemnly affirm that he would refuse civilly to disobey certain laws. 'Volunteers must explain to the signatory the full significance of the word 'civilly'...the possession and distribution to the public of literature prescribed by government and which one sincerely believes to be harmless, would be civil disobedience. Volunteers must explain to the would-be-signatory with the help of such illustrations the full significance of the pledge.'[19]

Besides volunteers were required to explain to every intending signatory that he must be prepared to bear every kind of suffering and to sacrifice, if necessary, both his person and property. He was also made to understand that he must be prepared to carry on the struggle single-handed even if left along.[20]

The third part of the pledge declared that the *satyagrahi* would fearlessly adhere to the principles of truth and *ahimsa.* He must not misrepresent anything or hurt anybody's feelings. Volunteers must urge upon people necessity of fully realizing the grave responsibility of adhering to truth and *ahimsa* before signing the pledge. Volunteer must

not speak of things they did not understand and must not hold out false hopes to anybody.[21] If they found themselves unable to explain anything they must consult the committee or refer the would be signatory to it. *Ahimsa* included *advesha*. Volunteers, therefore, must never resort to unfair criticism of the movement.[22] If in performing their duties they were obstructed by the police or others, they must not lose their temper but must courteously explain to those opposing them, their (volunteers') duty and their determination under any circumstances to perform the same.[23]

Volunteers were to accept the signatures of persons under eighteen and also students. And even in the case of those over 18, he must make sure that the signatory had decided after careful consideration. But volunteers must not induce persons to sign, upon whose earnings their families were solely dependent for their maintenance.[24]

Gandhi started the *Satyagraha Sabha,* the members of which were pledged to disobey the Rowlatt Act, if it was applied to them, as well as other objectionable laws to be specified from time to time. In other objectionable laws to be specified from time to time. In other words they were to court gaol openly and deliberately. Jawaharlal Nehru reacted thus: 'When I first read about this proposal in the newspapers my reaction was one of tremendous relief. Here at last was a way out of the tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective. I was afire with enthusiasm and wanted to join the *Satyagraha Sabha* immediately. I hardly thought of the consequences-law-breaking, goal-going etc.—and if I thought of them I did not care.'[25]

On 11 March, Gandhi once again reminded the Viceroy of the serious repercussions the passage of Rowlatt Bills would lead to in the country. In a telegram to him, he explained, 'Even at this eleventh hour I respectfully ask His Excellency and his government to pause and consider before passing Rowlatt Bills. Whether justified or not, there is no mistaking the strength of public opinion on the measure. I am sure government do not intend intensifying existing bitterness. Government will risk nothing by delay, but by expressly bowing to public opinion will smooth down feeling and enhance real prestige. I am proceeding to Bombay tomorrow by Jubbulpore Mail.'[26]

The passing of the Act through the Legislative Council had resulted in the vernacular presses of Delhi indulging in extravagant language and there had been meetings in Delhi condemning the Act. On 30th March, rioting which was the outcome of the *hartal* and

socalled passive resistance, took place. The crowds in the city were disorderly—mainly in Chandni Chowk and Hauz Kazi and people were being prevented from riding in *tongas* by the mob. 'It appears that a mob of people presumably some of those who had been enforcing *hartal* and stopping vehicles had invaded the Railway Station with the object of closing down the shops of the station, sweetmeat vendors who supply passengers with food and refreshment. A European had been pulled out of a *tonga* and the driver assaulted and the precincts of the Railway Station were the scene of more disorderly conduct. At least one man was arrested by the Railway Police.

'...Mr Mathews, the Assistant Station Superintendent was assaulted, his coat being torn off his back. A very excited crowd of rowdies invaded the Railway Station breaking flower plots and damaging railway property.

'They, however, created disturbance in the station yard and in the road with the object of releasing men whom they imagined had been arrested....The police drove the crowd off and into the Queen's Gardens opposite, and both police and troops were utilised to prevent the crowd returning to the station.

The upshot was that crowd became more and more unruly and excited, and proceeded to attack the forces present with sticks and stones. Matters came to such a pass that for the protection of the troops and police, many of whom had been hit including Mr. Marshall, Mr. Jeffreys, Sergeant Kemsley and even Mr. Currie himself. Mr. Currie sanctioned fire being opened, both police and troops firing a few rounds. as soon as the crowd began to withdraw, the order to cease fire was issued. Two rioters were killed inside the Queen's Gardens, and doubtless more were wounded.[27]

Initially, 30th March 1919 was fixed for the national protest, but the date was changed to 6th April. It was a simple yet unique programme of mass action—24 hours fast as a necessary discipline, the stopping of all work, the closing of all markets and business places and the holding of public meetings.[28]

On 7 April 1919, Gandhi launched a daily entitled *Satyagrahi* in defiance of the Indian Press Act. The paper had not been registered in accordance with the law. Gandhi explained to the subscribers. So there can be no annual subscription. Nor can it be guaranteed that the appear will be published without interruption. The editor (M.K. Gandhi) is

liable at any moment to be arrested by the government and it is impossible to ensure continuity of publication until India is in the happy position of supplying editors enough to take the place of those arrested. We shall leave no stone unturned to secure a ceaseless succession of editors. It is not our intention to break for all time the law governing publication of newspapers. This paper will, therefore, exist so long only as the Rowlatt legislation is not withdrawn.'[29]

In fact, *Satyagrahi* had come into being for the sake of ensuring withdrawal of the Rowlatt legislation. Its main motive, therefore, was to show to the people the ways and means of bringing about such withdrawal in accordance with the principles of *Satyagraha Pledge* required the signatories to court imprisonment by offering civil disobedience by committing a civil breach of certain laws. This publication can, therefore, show the best remedy in one way and that was by committing civil disobedience in the very act of publishing this journal. Thus this method of *Satyagraha* was unique. In it the example alone was precept. 'Therefore, whatever are suggested herein will be those that have been tested by personal experience, and remedies thus tested will be life well-tried medicine more valuable than new.'

A final guide-line was issued by the *Satyagraha Sabha* to the *Satyagraha* volunteers on 7 April 1919 along with a list of prohibited literature which should be made use of by them in public meetings. This prohibited literature was as follows.[20]

1. *Hind Swaraj* by M.K. Gandhi
2. *Sarvodaya or Universal Dawn* by M.k. Gandhi
3. *The Story of a Satyagrahi* by M.K. Gandhi
4. *The Life and Address of Mustafa Kamal Pasha*

In selecting this kind of prohibited literature, the *Satyagraha Sabha* had a few important considerations in view. Such a literature used by the *Satyagrahis* was to cause as little disturbance as possible among the governors and the governed. 'Until *Satyagrahis* have become seasoned, disciplined and capable of handling delicately organized movements, to select such laws only as can be disobeyed individually; to select as a first step, laws that have evoked popular disapproval and that from the *satyagraha* standpoint, are the most open to attack; to select laws whose civil breach would constitute an education for the people, showing them a clear way out of the difficulties that lie in the path of honest men desiring to do public work; (and) regarding

prohibited literature, to select such books and pamphlet as are not inconsistent with *satyagraha* and which are, therefore, of a clean type which do not, either directly or indirectly approve of or encourage violence.'[31]

Satyagraha volunteers were further advised to abide by some principles during the struggle. 'We are not in a position to expect to be arrested any moment. It is, therefore, necessary to bear in mind that, if anyone is arrested, he should without causing any difficulty allow himself to be arrested and, if summoned to appear before a court, he should do so. No defence should be offered and no leaders engaged in the matter. If a fine is imposed with the alternative of imprisonment, imprisonment should be accepted. If only a fine is imposed, it ought not to be paid but that his property, if he has any, should be allowed to be sold. There should be no demonstration of grief or otherwise made by the remaining *satyagrahis* by reason of the arrest and imprisonment of their comrade. It cannot be too often repeated that we court imprisonment and we may not complain of it when we actually receive it. When once imprisoned, it is our duty to conform to all prison regulations, as prison reform is no part of our campaign at the present moment. A *satyagrahi* may not resort to surreptitious practices, of which ordinary prisoners are often found to be guilty. All a *satyagrahi* does can only and must be done openly.'[32]

The *satyagrahis* were advised to receive copies of prohibited literature for distribution amongst the people from the secretaries of the *Satyagraha Sabha.* A novel feature of such a distribution was that it was to be done not in a secret way. *Satyagrahis* were, therefore, required, as far as possible, to write their names and addresses as sellers, so that they might be traced without any kind of difficulty when they were wanted by the government for prosecution, naturally, there could be no question of secret sale of this literature.[32] It was open to *satyagrahis* to form small groups of men and women to whom they might read this class of literature. Thus the object in supplying the selected prohibited literature was not merely to commit a civil breach of the law regarding it, but it was also to provide people with clean literature of a high moral value. It was expected by the Congress leadership that the government would confiscate such literature.[34]

Another unique feature of the *satyagraha* was that it was to be as independent of financial support as far as possible.[35] Moreover, when the copies of the prohibited literature were confiscated by the

government, *satyagrahis* were required to make more copies themselves or by securing the assistance of 'willing friends' and to make use of it until it was confiscated by giving readings to the people from it.[36] In fact, such readings would amount to dissemination of prohibited, literature. When all the copies would exhaust by dissemination or confiscation, *satyagrahis* might continue civil disobedience by writing out and distributing extracts from accessible books.[37]

Regarding civil breach of the law governing publications of newspapers, the idea was to publish in every *satyagraha* centre a written newspaper, without registering it. It was not to occupy more than one side of half a foolscap. 'A *satyagrahi,* for whom punishments provided by law have lost all terror, can given only in an unregistered newspaper his thoughts and opinions unhampered by any other consideration than that of his own conscience. His newspaper, therefore, it otherwise well-edited, can become a most powerful vehicle for transmitting pure ideas in a concise manner, and there need be no fear of inability to circulate a hand-written newspaper; for it will be the duty of those who may receive the first copies to recopy till at last the process of multiplication is made to cover, if necessary, the whole of the masses of India. And it must not be forgotten that we have in India the tradition of imparting instructions by oral teaching'.[38]

A large number of protest meetings were organized in various parts of the country. The social discontent got wider circulation in Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bombay United Provinces, Central Provinces and Calcutta. The rural areas, except in the Punjab and Gujarat were not effected by this agitation. With the unchallenged charisma which indeed was an effective weapon in Gandhian political armoury, he brought about a drastic change in the existing climate of politics and could easily muster support from different sections of the community dwelling mainly in cities and larger towns. The effect of this agitation proved as a significant aspect for launching bigger movement at all-India level in 1920. Undoubtedly, the *satyagraha* was organised, guided and planned by Gandhi at higher level, but it was effectively supported by the local leaders with the local support. At times, the sentiments of the mobs crossed the non-violent domains and resorted to assault, arson, looting and killing. As a result thereof the government machinery acted swiftly but callously and there were numerous shootings at places, the biggest and the most tragic being in the Jallianwala Bagh at a non-violent and unarmed assembly of people.

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3

Firing in The Bagh

In the Punjab, Amritsar was second in importance to Lahore, though in some respects it was more important even than Lahore. Its population in 1919 was 1,60,000. It is the city of the Golden Temple, the greatest place of worship for the Sikhs. Being the prominent commercial centre in the Punjab, it attracted travellers and visitors from all parts of the province and even from outside. Besides, it was one of the important centres of the Congress organisation in the province. It had also greatly developed socially, culturally, educationally and commercially. Flanked by a *mofussil* known for sturdy, prosperous and patriotic Hindus and Sikhs, any kind of sacrifice could be expected of them to save the honour of their motherland.

The Jallianwala Bagh, where the ghastly tragedy took place on 13 April 1919, is situated almost in the heart of the city. The word *Bagh* is a misnomer. 'Jalle' is the caste name of original owner, 'wala' is the genitive termination; and the *Bagh* meaning a garden, is, in fact, an open piece of waste land surrounded by houses. It was, at that time, a private property owned in common by several people. It was an irregular quadrangle, indifferently walled, and in most cases, the back walls of the house surrounding it enclosed the quadrangle.

The Punjab government reported about political condition in Amritsar thus: 'Orders having been received for the arrest and deportation of Dr. Kitchlew and Satyapal, the Deputy Commissioner sent for them on the morning of April 10th to his house from where they left in motors for Dharmshala at about 10-30 a.m. with an escort, incharge of Mr. Rehill, Superintendent of Police. By about 11 a.m. the news of the arrests became known in the city, and ardent followers of the deportees went round urging the people to close their shops and assemble in the Aitchison Park, with the intention of proceeding to the Deputy Commissioner's House and demanding their release.

'As it was expected that the arrest of Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal would cause a certain amount of excitement, it had been previously arranged that the Officer Commanding the Station would have a force of British infantry and some mounted men from the ammunition column in the Rambagh with which he was to hold the railway foot-bridge, the railway overbridge and the hospital level-crossing while the Police Lines level crossing was to be held by the police. Their was also an armed police reserve of 75 men at the City Kotwali.

'Another mob of some thousands made a determined attempt to wreck its vengeance on British Banks and Christian religious buildings inside the city and to murder every Britisher they came across.

'The National Bank of India was attacked and its Manager, Mr. Stewart was brutally murdered in one room and his assistant, Mr. Scott, was done to death in an adjoining one. The office furniture was heaped on the bodies and set on fire. The bank building was set on fire too, and the store godowns were burnt open and their contents (piece-goods) looted.

'The Chartered Bank was then attacked and the furniture and fittings smashed up, but every effort to break open the safe failed. The Manager, Mr. J.W. Thomson, and his assistant, Mr. Ross, were hiding at the top of a more than 50 yards away the mob bolting on their approach.

'The Alliance Bank was similarly attacked: the mob breaking open the door, rushed upstairs into the office rooms. Mr G.M. Thomson, the Manager, fired through a crevice in the door and killed one of the rioters. He then ran up the steps, to the top of the roof where he was followed by the mob who went up by another staircase in the piece-goods market. Driven from the roof, he came down the steps leading to his office, where he was seized, beaten and left for dead. Hearing that he was still alive, the mob rushed up again and finished him off and threw his body into the street below, where they heaped office furniture on it and set fire to it. The Bank safe was burst open and the contents, notes and cash were looted.

'The Religious Society's Book Depot and Hall were burnt and the Indian pastor, the Rev, Jaswant Singh and his wife who were living in the upper story just managed to escape in time. The Town Hall and the Sub-Post Office attached to it were set on fire and completely gutted, while the Sub-Post Offices at the Golden Temple, Majith Mandi and Dhab Basti Ram were looted.'

Besides Miss Sherwood, a mission lady, was caught in the heart of the city while on her way to a girls' school and was beaten with shoes and sticks till she fell down exhausted when she was rescued by some Hindus living in the same quarter and carried to their house.[2] Outside the city, the mob set fire to Indian Christian Church, the bare walls of which only remained standing. The Normal Girls' school was attacked and clothes and books etc. set on fire inside the building.[3]

A day prior to the tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh, a meeting attended by about 100 persons, was arranged in the campus of the Hindu Sabha School at Amritsar with the initiative of Hans Raj.[4] The idea was to have discussion about the arrests of Dr. Satyapal, Dr. Kitchlew and other local leaders and also to devise ways and means for the line of action to be taken in the near future.[5] The discussion led to a decision which was announced by Hans Raj that a meeting was to be held the next day in the campus of the Jallianwala Bagh under the presidentship of Lala Kanheya Lal, an esteemed resident of the town. It was also made clear that a statement from Dr. Kitchlew would be read by his wife before the assembly of the people there.[6] This decision was given a wide publicity in the whole city the next day before noon. Kanheya Lal denied before the committee his having been approached by anybody for presiding over the meeting of 13 April. It seems that his name was simply advertised to attract the audience togather in a large number in the *Bagh*.

Soon after his arrival at Amritsar, Dyer halted at the railway station where he called a meeting of the local officials including the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police. He was apprised of the earlier events in the city, especially about Miss Sherwood who was shabbily treated by the local mob. Dyer felt much concerned about the loss of European lives, damage to government property and last but not the least about Miss Sherwood.

In order to have a spacious place for himself and his force, Dyer shifted his headquarters from railway station to Ram Bagh so that he could have a better glimpse of the civil population so far as their activities were concerned. Soon he had a round of the town to acquaint himself with the type of people and the prevailing political atmosphere. At places he was jeered at by the people and he made up his mind to arrest the ring-leaders and punish them severely. Several of them were arrested, chained and put under army custody.

Besides Dyer was prompt enough to warn the inhabitants of Amritsar that if they made any kind of mischief tantamount to the breach of law and caused damage to the government property, the offenders would be severely punished in accordance with the military law. Beside they were warned not to hold any public meeting.

During these days, Amritsar presented a picture of an army camp. Lala Girdhari Lal, Deputy Chairman of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce, witnessed a grim picture on 11th April. He saw batches of policemen guarding the Amritsar railway station and the railway lines. The railway station itself looked like a military post. There was no porter nor conveyance of any kind. 'With great difficulty he reached the foot-bridge where there was a guard of some European solider who would not let any one enter the city without a thorough search. At every step outside the city one could see nothing but military or police at short distances with rifles and bayonets. Water supply had been stopped and so was the electric connection. All was dark in Amritsar on the eve of April 13, 1919.

It was Sunday and the day of Baisakhi. In the Punjab, the harvest festival of Baisakhi is celebrated with great enthusiasm as the day which marks the end of the period of long and arduous labour. Peasants from all parts of the state assemble in towns and cities. For the Sikhs it is the day on which the Khalsa came into being. Naturally, the sacred city of the Golden Temple was filled on that day by people from all over the district many of whom had come to take a dip in the holy tank.

'The public meeting at Jallianwala Bagh had been hastily arranged. In many ways, it was an expression of the spontaneous urge of the people of the sacred city to proclaim that their sensibilities had not been dulled by O'Dwyerean tyranny. After the events of April 10, 11 and 12, the people of Amritsar sought a way of expressing their many 'emotions---anger, grief and resolution. The announcements made in the different parts of the city about the meeting to be held were sketchy. Very few people knew who was organising the meeting and who would speak to them but they did not care. Their one intent was to assemble together and to say that the struggle was not over'.[8]

On 13 April, General Dyer marched through the city with the civil officials and by the beating of a drum got the following official order announced at many places. 'It is hereby proclaimed to all whom it may concern that no person residing in the city is permitted or allowed to leave the city in his own private or hired conveyance or on foot without

a pass from one of the following officers.... No person residing in Amritsar city is permitted to leave his house after 8.00 p.m. Any person found in the streets after 8.00 p.m. is liable to be shot. No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets in the city or any part of the city or outside of it at any time. Any such processions or any gathering of four men will be looked upon and treated as an unlawful assembly and dispersed by force of arms if necessary.'

Soon after his proclamation, two persons were deputed to go round the city to announce a counter-proclamation, moderately, with the bang of tin, telling the people of Amritsar about a mass meeting to be arranged in the precincts of the Jallianwala Bagh on 13 April at 4:30 p.m. under the presidentship of Kanheya Lal, an eminent advocate of the town.

At about 12:45 p.m. General Dyer received the news that a huge meeting was to be held at Jallianwala Bagh at 4:30 p.m. on the same day. He admitted that he took no steps to prevent the meeting. 'I want you to explain,' asked Lord Hunter, 'why you did not take measures to prevent the crowd from assembling at the Jallianwala Bagh?' The General answered, 'I went there as soon as I could. I had to organise my forces, to think the matter out....I thought I had done enough in warning them not to meet.' Lord Hunter further asked, 'did the making of dispositions necessitate the occupation of the time between 12:40 p.m. to 4 p.m.' General dyer answered, 'I did not believe that they would really meet, after all that I had done in the morning.'

According to the available evidence, prior to General Dyer's arrival the audience estimated at 20,000. Hans Raj and a few others were standing on an improvised platform. An aeroplane was hovering over the meeting before the arrival of the troops. Hans Raj announced in the audience not to be afraid. The audience included many boys and children, and some men had come with infants in their arms. The people assembled there had no *lathis* or any kind of weapon with them. Besides there were some C.I.D. men also at the meeting.

A few minutes before the sunset, Dyer with the company of young officers, Briggs and Anderson, fifty riflemen, forty Gurkhas armed with their traditional weapons, the *kukris* and two armed cards, marched towards the Jallianwala Bagh with the clear intention of teaching the severest lesson of life to the peaceful assembly of the people. Undoubtedly the entrance of the *Bagh* was too narrow and, therefore, the armoured cars were parked out of the lane.

The organisers of this meeting showed much concern about the earlier happenings in the city when a few persons were killed as a result of promulgation of the Rowlatt Act which had afforded unchallenged powers to the bureaucracy. The main resolutions passed, therefore, dealt with these important issues— the first dealing with the severity of the application of the Rowlatt Bills and the second in connection with the firings of the previous day.

Dyer had a minute glimpse of the assembly of the people in the *Bagh* where the seventh speaker, Durga Das was speaking from the platform. The earlier six speakers were Rai Ram Singh, Dar Singh, Abdul Majid, Brij Gopi Nath, Hans Raj and Gurbaksh Rai. Dyer who was in independent command of the force under him was not to consult anybody at this point of time. He had already made up his mind to act in a way which might be a lesson-giving to the people of the Punjab. Not losing even a mirute, he at once ordered his sepoys to adopt kneeling position, a usual posture for a soldier to fire. The firing order was given and the numerous volley of shots began to pierce into the bodies of the people in the *Bagh.*[9] It continued for about ten minutes till the ammunition was exhausted. It panicked the crowd and they ran pell mell in all directions. Even the assurance from Durga Das that the firing consisted of blank shots, did not satisfy anybody.[10] In a moment, men were falling dead and wounded on the ground. Swinson stated thus.[11]

'Immediately, the crowd panicked; rose to its feet and began streaming towards the narrow exists on the far side of the Bagh. Holding his position, Durga Das shouted that there was no need to worry; the troops were firing blanks. But even as he spoke, men began failing, the blood splurging red on their white *dhotis* and *patluns.* Das looked towards the troops in horror then dived behind the cover of the platform. The firing went on, the troops reloading in their own time.

'Towards the exits on either flank, the crowds converged in their frantic effort to get away, jostling, clambering, elbowing and trampling over each other. Seeing this movement, Briggs drew Dyer's attention to it, and Dyer, mistakenly imagining that these sections of the crowd were getting ready to rush him, directed the fire of the troops straight at them. The result was horror, men screamed and went down to be trampled by those coming after. Some were hit again. In places the head and wounded lay in heaps; men would go down wounded to find themselves immediately buried beneath a dozen others.

'The firing still sent on. Hundreds, abandoning all hope of getting away through the exits, tried the walls which in places were five feet high and at others seven or ten....

Twenty thousand people were caught beneath the hail of bullets all of them frantically trying to escape from the quiet meeting-place which had suddenly become a screaming hell.'[12]

When the firing ceased, anything except dead bodies was visible in each and every corner of the *Bagh* Some dead bodies were lying outside the *Bagh*. It so happened that the wounded persons who tried to run, could not survive and fell dead after a vain attempt to save themselves. The wounded were crying for help but nobody around the locality of the *Bagh* dared peep out of their houses for fear of being shot dead. The *Bagh* thus looked like a mini battlefield which was full of numerous corpses and wounded persons.

There had been no agreement on the exact figures of those killed in this ghastly tragedy. Dyer estimated between 200 and 300[13] and official figures were 379 killed and over 1200 wounded. Swami Shraddhanand gave the figures as 1500 killed, but Madan Mohan Malaviya stated that 1000 were killed. It is, however, probable that when 1650 rounds were fired, the loss of lives must have been to the tune of a few hundreds and a much more number must have been wounded. A huge number of deaths were caused by the stampede that followed soon after the firing. The injured and the wounded might have concealed the identity for fear of the severe action under the martial law that was promulgated a few days after this tragedy. Hence their number could not be properly ascertained.

This type of ghastly and gruesome tragedy perpetrated on a few hundred persons was indeed an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of India. This was done by a senior army official who gave no serious thought to his inhuman action which he undertook to satisfy his personal whims and fancies. There had been firings on meetings, processions and mobs earlier by the British bureaucracy in India, but this kind of tragic drama as was enacted on a peaceful assembly in Jallianwala Bagh, was never heard of. The justification for firing put forward by General Dyer does not satisfy an impartial observer of the events at Amritsar.

Dyer gives an unconvincing reason to the fact that the mob which was considerable in number on account of the celebration of the Baisakhi

day would have become unmanageable and would have overpowered him and his small force rendering him to be too late to control the critical situation in the city. This was simply a working of his mind which was not based on any kind of logic. About twenty thousand persons had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh to hear the earlier story of the arrest and deportation of their two prominent leaders, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal and the misrule which was tantamount to various kinds of repressions and administrative lapses on the part of Michael O'Dwyer. They would have dispersed peacefully in various parts of the city was well as to their respective villages from where they had come to Amritsar with the twin purpose of paying visit to the Golden Temple as well as showing their sense of unity, solidarity and patriotism to a common cause.

It is unfortunate to hear Dyer saying that the assembly of people in the Jallianwala Bagh consisted of defiant characters and of criminal revolutionaries who were bent upon doing damage to human life and property. This kind of opinion smacks of unwarranted prejudice of highest degree. From all evidence available to us it was a non-violent assembly of peace-loving citizens of Amritsar and innocent people from the *mofussil.* To expect any kind of violent behaviour from them after the dispersal of such a meeting was only a mistaken notion in Dyer's mind. Already much had happened in various parts of the city and the local citizens had been adequately punished for that.

It was heinous crime, nay immoral as well as illegal, to shoot such a big number of people to death like sheep and goats in shambles. A mob of this magnitude or even of more or lesser magnitude could be dispersed in a way with a loss of very few lives or no loss of life at all. No law of the land permits any official—military or civil—to shoot people to death without a clear cut warning for dispersal announced on the mikie. In the normal procedure, when the mob is unruly, violent and uncontrollable, firing is done in the air or in a way, where people are injured on legs etc. but not get killed. In this case, it appears that Dyer gave no warning to the people assembled in the *Bagh* and resorted to unprecedented firing thus violating the implications of the existing law. Granted that under the Martial Law regime, an army commander wields a kind of super powers in his hands, but this should never be tantamount to taking lives of people in a way it was done in Jallianwala Bagh. Dyer tried to give statements before the Hunter Committee which were evasive and unconvincing. He replied, ' I could have dispersed

them for sometime. Then they would all come back and laughed at me and I considered I would be making myself a fool.'When this kind of thinking lurks in the mind of a martial law administrator, it is indeed difficult to expect justice and fair-play from him in this kind of situation.

The amount of ammunition used and the duration of firing are highly questionable. Dyer used about 1600 rounds and the firing continued for about ten minutes. The firing was done at low height so that it could be more effective, and its worst feature was that it stopped when the ammunition was exhausted. It is indeed unfortunate that no local civil official was consulted and taken into confidence in this kind of severe action by Dyer. A civil official is fully conversation with the political and other views of the people whom he administers. Miles Irving, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, was not consulted before the firing in the *Bagh.*

When the firing was over, Dyer and his men left the precincts of the Jallianwala Bagh which was full of dead bodies. Numerous persons were badly wounded and they were crying for help. No medical aid was available for them. They also breathed their last in the next few hours. Many lives could have been saved with the timely provision of medical aid.

The Government of India passed the following order on 13th April 1919[14] 'Whereas, the Governor-General-in-Council is satisfied that a state of open rebellion against the authority of the government exists in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar in the Province of the Punjab.

'Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 2 of the Bengal State Offences. Regulation, 1804, the Governor-General-in-Council is hereby pleased to suspend the functions of the ordinary Criminal Courts within those Districts insofar as the trial of persons of the classes referred to in the said Regulation taken in arms in open hostility to the British Government or in the act of opposing by force of arms the authority of the same, or in the actual commission of any overt act of rebellion against the State or in the act of openly aiding and abetting the enemies of the British Government within the said Districts, is concerned, and to establish Martial Law within the said Districts.

'The Governor-General-in-Council is also pleased to direct the immediate trial by courts-martial of all persons owing allegiance to the British Government, either in consequence of their having been born,

or of their residents within its territories and under its protection, who shall be taken in arms in open hostility to the British Government, or in the act of opposing by force of arms the British Government, or in the act of opposing by force of arms the authority of the same or in the actual commission of any overt act of rebellion against the State, or in the act of openly aiding and abetting the enemies of the British Government within any part of the said Districts'.[15] Similar orders were issued by the Government of India in connection with Gujranwala, Lyallpur and other areas in the Punjab.[16]

Girdhari Lal, prominent local Congressmen, happened to watch the scene from a house overlooking the *Bagh*. He saw hundreds of persons killed on the spot. The worst part of the whole thing was that firing was directed towards the gates through which the people were turning out. There were small outlets, four or five in all, and bullets actually rained over the people at all these gates. Many persons got trampled under the feet of the rushing crowds and thus lost their lives. Besides blood was pouring in profusion. Even those who lay flat on the ground were shot. There were heaps of dead bodies scattered at different directions. The dead bodies were of grown up people and young boys also. Some of them had their heads cut open, others had eyes shot, and nose, chest arms or legs shattered. 'I think there must have been over 1,000 dead bodies in the garden then.... I saw people were hurrying up and many had to leave them dead and wounded, because they were afraid of being fired upon again after 8 p.m.'

Ratan Devi told the Congress Enquiry Committee: 'I was in my house near Jallianwala Bagh when I heard shots fired.... I got up at once as I was anxious because my husband had gone to the *Bagh*.... There I saw heaps of bodies and I began to search for my husband.... By this time it was 8 o'clock and no one could stir out of his house because of the curfew order. I stood on, waiting and crying. At about eight thirty a Sikh gentleman came.... I entreated the Sikh gentleman to help me in removing my husband's body to a dry place, for that place was over-flowing with blood. He took the body by the head and I by the legs and we carried it to a dry place and laid it down on a wooden block. I waited up to 10.00 p.m. Then I started towards Katra again and saw an old man. I repeated the whole of my sad story to him. He took pity on me and asked the men to go with me. But they said that it was 10.00 o'clock and that they would not like to be shot down.... So I went back and seated myself by the side of dead husband. Accordingly,

I found a bamboo stick which I kept in my hand to keep off dogs. I saw men writting in agony.... A boy of about twelve years old in agony extreated me not to leave the place.... I asked him if he wanted any wrap and if he feeling cold I could spread it over him. He asked for water, but water could not be procured at that place. I was all alone the whole night in a solitary jungle. Nothing but the barking of dogs, the braying of donkeys and the groans of the wounded was audible.'

During his brief halt at Amritsar Jawaharlal Nehru recorded a statement by Maqbul Mohamad, an advocate of High Court and a resident of Amritsar. 'On the 10th just after the firing stopped at the carriage overbridge I went to the hospital and brought Dr. Dhanpat Rail[17] there. Mr. G.S. Salaria,[18] Dr. Dhanpat Rai and I first came to dress a stout young lad of about 18 who lay badly wounded with his intestines and abdominal viscera turned out and lying in the dusty road. He made signs for water. I brought it in my cap and poured some water into his mouth. He revived a little and could then blust out a few words. Dr. Dhanpat Rai then came to attend on him. The youngman with faltering accents said, '*meri koi ummeed naheen, mere nal ke bhai ka intizam karo*'. He stopped, then gasped brokenly: '*Hindu-Musulman ki Jai*' and expired'.

Miles Irving explained thus:[19] 'Generally speaking I as Deputy Commissioner acted as intermediary between the people and the military.... The order about crawling past the picket at the place where Miss Sherwood was announced by General Dyer to the troops at the same time as he warned them against any private act of reprisals. It was also announced to the civilians in the Fort and he explained to me that his idea was to emphasise in the most public and striking way the enormity of an offence against a woman, and by so doing to take men's minds off the idea of private reprisals for an offence so calculated to provoke them.'

In Amritsar, Dyer now had the undisputed control. On the night of the 13th, when some shopkeepers came to him and begged permission to open their premises, he granted it, and business was in a normal state the next morning. The curfew was also relaxed, the water supply restored, and life returned almost to normal.

'On 19th April, Martial Law was formally proclaimed, and a great combing of the city began to find the criminals and agitators. The police, humiliated by the crowd on the 10th, began taking their revenge, and

men brought in for questioning let alone the main suspects, had a rough time of it. A triangle was set up where twenty-five offenders were later flogged. It was this time that Dyer committed the stupidest act of his entire career. when he instituted the 'Crawling Order' which laid down that Indians passing down the Kucha Kanrianwala, the lane where Miss Sherwood had been beaten, should between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. be made to go down on all face and crawl.'[20]

The police began to arrest people indiscriminately. There was no break after that and persons in every sphere of life were arrested from day to day, while employed peacefully in their occupations. No charge was sated against them; they were handcuffed and put into the lock-up for days and months, without being informed what they were accused of and no opportunity was ever allowed to them to see or consult friends or relations?

'His (Dyer's) only concern seemed to be to add to his laurels of the Afghan war by another display of what he considered to be military efficiently. For him even an unarmed crowd was a hostile army. 'For me" he said, 'the battlefield of France and Amritsar was the same." Before leaving Jullundur for Amritsar he told his son that a big show was coming'.

A proclamation was made in Amritsar and the surrounding villages inviting all persons who had any information regarding the names of those who had met with deaths. Instructions were issued to the local authorities there to encourage men to come forward and give information they possessed. 'Every possible step was taken in that direction. The result of the enquiry was that the total number of casualties amounted to 291, and any further number suggested by any body must be taken with great discretion.'[21]

On 14 April, a meeting of the local residents, Municipal Commissioners, Magistrates and merchants was called at the Kotwali, where Mr. Kitchin, the Commissioner made the following speech. 'Do you people want peace or war? We are prepared in every way. The government is all powerful. *Sarkar* has conquered Germany and is capable of doing everything. The general will give orders today. The city is in his possession. I can do nothing. You will have to obey order.'

After this, the commissioner went away. General Dyer with Miles Irvining, Rehill, Rehill, Plomer and a few military soldiers came about 5 p.m. the same day. He refused into the room, followed by others, all

exceedingly angry and delivered a speech in Urdu. The following is the translation:

'You people know well that I am a sepoy and soldier. Do you want war or peace? If you wish for war, the government is prepared for it, and if you want peace, then obey my orders and open all your shops; else I will shoot. For me the battlefield of France or Amritsar is the same. I am a military man and I will go straight. Neither shall I move to the right nor to the left. Speak up, if you want war. In case there is to be peace, my order is to open all shops at once. You people talk against the government, and persons educated in Germany and Bengal talk sedition. I shall report all these. Obey orders. I do not wish to have anything else. I have served in the military for over 30 years. I understand the Indian sepoy and the Sikh people very well. You will have to observe peace; otherwise the shops will be opened by force and by rifles. You must inform me of the *badmashes.* I will shoot them. Obey orders and open shops. Speak up if you want war.'[22] General Dyer's speech was followed by that of Miles Iring, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar. The two sentences of his speech may be quoted here, 'You have committed a bad act in killing the English. The revenge will be taken upon you and your children.[23]

These speeches in the shape of a severe warning from no less officials than Dyer and the Deputy Commissioner had salutary effect on the local commercial class which had witnessed a gruesome tragedy unprecedented in the history of India. Next day, all the shops were opened. A common person would have thought that with the retribution of the 13th April, the authoritative speeches of the 14th and the opening of the shops, the ordinary civil rule would be resumed, but it was not to be. The revenge had not yet been fully taken. To gear up the machinery of the government in a way the British administrators wanted, martial law as proclaimed which remained in force up to the 9th June and the life of the local people was made difficult and intolerable in numerous ways.

The street in which Miss Sherwood was assaulted was set apart for flogging people and for making those who passed through it to crawl on their bellies. All were made to *salam,* in theory British officials only, but in practice every English man, on pain of being arrested and suffering indignities. Flogging was administered publicly and otherwise, even for trivialities. All the lawyers of the town were made special

constables without cause and made to work like ordinary coolies. Indiscriminate arrests were effected of person, irrespective of their social status and position, and during detention they were subjected to humiliations, discomforts and indescribable tortures for the purpose of extorting confession or evidence or for the purpose of merely humiliating them. Besides, special tribunals were appointed for trying offence, which resulted in gross injustice in the name of law, leaving the aggrieved parties without a right to appeal.

The lane in which the crawling took place was a narrow and thickly populated place, with double-storey buildings on either side of it, and with numerous blind alleys shooting out of the lane and containing several houses. For the inhabitants of the lane, if they wanted to make any purchases or to go to the city, there was no option but to pass through some part of it, and thereof to crawl in and out. Besides sanitary or medical service could only be rendered on condition of crawling. The full length of the lane was about 150 yards. In the middle of it was seen an oblong marked 'Tiktiki' which was the specially erected flogging booth. The order remained in force for eight days. Although General Dyer had called it 'going on all fours' and it had been called 'hand and knee order' by the press, the process consisted in the persons lying flat on their bellies and crawling exactly like the reptiles. Any lifting of the knees or bending thereof brought the rifle butts on the backs of the persons who were made to crawl. The whole movement had therefore to be performed by movement of the belly and the arms. The lane, like most Indian lanes, was dirty and full of the usual rubbish, not excluding grit.

The promulgation of Martial Law in various districts of the Punjab was a phenomenon autocratic in nature which was disliked and criticised by the national leadership. The justification of its promulgation on the part of the government was founded on an old regulation of the *Raj* By Article 2 of the Bengal Regulation 10 of 1804 the Governor-in-Council was entitled to direct any public authority or officer to order the suspension, wholly or partially, of the functions of the ordinary criminal courts of judicature.

The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab with the concurrence of the General Officer Commanding the 16th Division and Chief Justice of the High Court made declaration of martial law at Lahore and Amritsar on 15th April. Similar applications were made in respect of Gujranwala on 15th April, Gujrat on 18th April and Lyallpur on 20th

April. Sanction having been given to the declaration of martial law as asked, proclamations to this effect were made in these districts on 16th, 19th and 24th April respectively. On the declaration of Martial Law in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar, General Beynon, commanding the 16th Division at Lahore, assumed command. Colonel Money was appointed under him to administer Martial Law. The officers commanding in Amritsar, in Lahore civil area and in Lahore Cantonment administered Martial Law.

The powers of area officers as regards punishment were under the proclamations, limited to sentencing an offender to two years' rigorous imprisonment or fine not exceeding Rs. 1,000 or both, and to whipping in addition to or in lieu of any other punishment.[24]

In the first-half of April, 1919, the Government of the Punjab reported, 'The Satyagraha agitation and the Delhi riots have latterly monopolised attention. Violence and misrepresentation had reached such a pitch that government has been constrained to take stringent action.... The extraordinary virulence and intemperate attacks on government which have characterised almost the whole Indian Press for sometime past are, as is becoming increasingly apparent, largely responsible for the present state of the country.'[25]

On 19 April 1919, General Beynon issued a Martial Law proclamation containing certain regulations that were to be enforced within the limits of the 16th Indian Division in all places to which Martial Law had been or might be extended. This document defined as Martial Law offences the act of being in arms against the State or inciting others to be in arms; assisting or harbouring rebels; failure to report gatherings of rebels. Use of language or issuing proclamations likely to foment rebellion or promote hostility between different classes of His Majesty's subjects; interference with railways, canals or telegraphs; possession of motor vehicle without permit; departure from or entry to a proclaimed area save under conditions to be prescribed; convening or attending a meeting of more than five persons; escaping or attempting to escaping from legal custody; disobeying an order given by a civil military officer in the execution of his duty when administering Martial law; disseminating false intelligence likely to cause alarm or despondency; destroying martial law notices; refusing to give a correct name and address on demand and committing an act in prejudice of good order of public safety or calculated to hamper or mislead His Majesty's forces.[26]

Offences against these regulations were to be tried summarily by officers known as area officers. In Amritsar district, the General Officer Commanding the Jullundur Brigade became the administrator of Martial Law, and had at first-one area officer of Major's rank.[27] Lahore district was divided into two areas (a) the Lahore Civil Area and (b) Lahore district, outside the city, the latter being in the hands of the General Officer Commanding Lahore Brigade. The civil area was under Lt. Colonel F. Johnson who was given three officers, of or above Major's rank, as area officers. The administrator in the Lahore district area was subsequently given a separate area officer of Captain's rank for Kasur.[28]

At the time of the proclamation of Martial Law at Gujranwala, the General Officer Commanding, 2nd, Rawalpindi Division, issued a proclamation on 20 April almost in the same terms to that issued by General Beynon.[29] The administration of Martial Law was carried on by the General Officer Commanding, Sialkot Brigade who moved his headquarters to Wazirabad. Besides the Deputy Commissioner of Gujranwala was notified as area officer for Gujranwala; an officer of Major's rank as area officer for Wazirabad, the Joint Deputy Commissioner for the Sheikhupura area and an officer of Captain's rank for Hafizabad. Gujrat and Lyallpur both came under the general Rawalpindi proclamation. Besides on 24 May, 1919, orders were passed by the Punjab government directing the precensorship of the same newspapers, *viz.*, *Congress, Vujaya, Qaum* and *Inqilab.*[30]

At Lahore, the position was no better. Colonel Johnson, incharge of Martial Law administration, had constituted summary courts. He himself tried cases. Two hundred seventy-seven persons were thus tried of whom 201 were convicted. The maximum sentence was two years imprisonment, thirty stripes and also a fine of one thousand rupees. The highest number of stripes was thirty, the lowest five. These men were publicly flogged until an order came to the effect that they were not to be so flogged. There was hardly any medical examination. When Lord Hunter asked him whether he never imagined the punishment had serious effect, he answered, 'I cannot imagine it.' In his opinion it was 'the kindliest method of punishment.' To Mr. Justice Rankin he said, the terrorised people, and dozens and dozens of sentences were saved. Justice Rankin thought that it was a little strong to suggest that whipping should be regarded as the most efficacious and convenient method of summarily dealing with masses of people in minor breaches and asked Col. Johnson whether it should not be rather exceptional and the answer

was, 'I hardly agree with you. You have a very great population. You are creating new offences by the issue of these orders. If the jail is the only punishment, it would not affect this population here very much. The jail is an extraordinarily comfortable place from the general standard of household in the city. They are well-fed in the Central Jail and one would soon have got used to that conditions. We were going to have the whole lot of them. I feared the jail would be filled.'[31]

Colonel Johnson had commandeered 800 *tongas* which number was finally reduced to 200, and these were detained up to the time the Martial Law was in force. He also commandeered all the motor cars belonging to Indians. He restricted travelling by railways, so as 'to limit the activities of gentlemen who might proceed outside the city to the district with a view to cause trouble there. He issued an order stopping all the free restaurants. He regulated the prices of food stuffs. He dispossessed licenceholders of their guns and his order had to be restrained by the government in regard to those who were known to be men of 'undoubted loyalty'. He confirmed the orders that were issued by the Deputy Commissioner closing the Badshahi Mosque, and it was permitted to be opened only on an undertaking being given by the trustees that 'No Hindu would be allowed to enter the Badshahi Mosque.[32]

Colonel Johnson's railway travelling order, besides being general, was particularly aimed at lawyers' clerks and their messengers. It is wellknown how far this bias against the lawyer class was carried, how lawyers from outside the Punjab were refused admittance on the ground that they might also disseminate sedition. 'Even a scholarly lawyer of Mr. Manohar Lal's standing, respectability, known loyalty...could not count upon being safe from the attentions of the Martial Law Officers.[33] He was arrested on 18th April 1919 as a trustee of *The Tribune* newspaper published from Lahore.[34] There was no warrant nor was he apprised of any kind of charge under which he had been arrested. He stated the pathetic circumstances under which he was arrested and subjected to serious mental depression and torture. 'On my arrest at my house, I had barely two minutes to take leave of my wife and children, and I was given no indication of where I was to be taken...I was removed by the Police from the Telegraph Office to the Central Jail, Lahore, where after the usual ceremonies at the gate, of depositing watch and chain, pencil, loose cash etc. and signing the Register by my thumb impression only, I was taken into a cell in the Ward No. 14 of the jail. This ward is meant

for condemned prisoners, or those awaiting for capital or similar offences. In this cell, I was supplied after a time with two filthy jail, blankets, and two iron basins to eat and drink out of it. After about three hours, I was transferred to another part of the jail, known as the *Chakkis, i.e.*, a series of cells furnished with arrangements for grinding corn....All our sanitary and other arrangements were inside the small cells, consisting of stinking earthen vessels, cleaned twice a day.

'My wife and children had no idea of where I was confined till late in the afternoon of the day of my arrest. I was allowed no communication with them, except for the post card I was able to send through the Superintendent of the Jail, on Saturday afternoon.

'On Wednesday, the 23rd I was transferred to the European ward, where I was comparatively more comfortable, having considerable liberty of movement, and because of the accommodation, and clears lavatory and washing arrangements and a small library.'[35]

The following are the figures of the sententence of whipping inflicted in the five districts under Martial Law, ranging from 3 to 80. Lahore 80; Kasur 79; Chuharkhana 40; Gujranwala 24; Amritsar 32; Gujrat 3 and Lyallpur nil. This makes the total of 258.[36] The Secretary of State showed concern over the manner of flogging and whipping people in public in his communication to Viceroy[37] on 28 April 1919, 'If we are challenged it may be difficult to convince public of appropriateness of action in these cases and I shall be glad of your views.'

Thus the regime of General Dyer perpetrated numerous kinds of other punishments which were degradation personified. The water supply and the electric supply to the people of Amritsar were stopped thus putting them to unthinkable harassment. The prohibition of the issue of third-class tickets to the railway passengers involved a general suspension by many Indian people. More than two persons were prohibited from any kind of meeting. Vehicles were commandeered and prices of commodities were fixed by military authorities. The censoring of the press was so strict that the ingress and egress of people to and from the Punjab was rigidly regulated.

The sufferings of the student community at Lahore was unprecedented during the period of Martial Law. They suffered an unbearable indignities, indescribable harassments and indiscriminate floggings at the hands of the authorities. The punishments were

tantamount to expulsions, rustications, detention, forfeiture of scholarships, forfeiture of fee concessions and refusal of readmissions.

CONCLUSION

Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer fired and continued to fire until the crowd dispersed. By doing so, he considered that this was the least amount of firing which could produce the 'necessary moral and widespread effect.' He did not consult anybody before taking such a bloody, ghastly, tragic and inhuman step of 'butchering' unarmed and non-violent assembly of persons like sheep and goats in shambles. He gave no warning, a common prevalent legal norm, generally carried out by the officials incharge of such an assembly, to the people assembled in the *Bagh*. 'The soldiers began to fire at once. No warning was given.'

'The terrified crowd, estimated by general Dyer at the time to number 5,000 but which was afterwards agreed to have numbered at least 25,000 people, surged outwards, splitting into two vast waves, both vainly trying to escape the torturing bullets which continued to fly for fifteen minutes...Many people were hit in the back. The soldiers continued firing in the direction in which the crowd was running.[38]

It was an act of sheer massacre of an unarmed assembly, an appalling atrocity and a ghastly action perpetrated without any kind of serious thinking. If the existing situation was thought to be unmanageable and beyond control, its only solution was not gunning down the people. Any other solution, far less tragic and devatative in magnitude and consequence, if operated upon after consultations with the seasoned bureaucracy, would not have brought about such incalculable loss of human life.

'The exact figures of the killed and the injured will never be known, whether 379—which was the official version-died, or one thousand, is relevant. The fact is that while the Government in England was announcing its intention to train Indians for self government through political reforms, its agents in India were actually giving Indians lessons in frightfulness to develop the qualities of servility, cowardice, hypocrisy and sycophancy.'[39]

Gandhi wrote in his autobiography,[3] 'Sir Michael O'Dwyer held me responsible for all that had happened in the Punjab, and some irate young Punjabis held me responsible for the Martial Law. They asserted, that if only I had not suspended civil disobedience, there would have

been no Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Some of them even went the length of threatening me with assassination if I went to the Punjab.' But Gandhi felt otherwise. He was indeed impatient to go to the Punjab to have the first hand knowledge of the prevailing situation. He had never been there and that made him all the more anxious to 'see things for myself.' Dr. Satyapal, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Pandit Rambhaj Dutt Chaudhari who had invited him to the Punjab, were at this time in jail.

The government officials tried ways and methods of extortion which indeed left a lot of discontent amongst the people. The Punjab was greatly hurt and was seething with dissatisfaction, anger and discontent. The unmitigated force and unscrupulous methods used, naturally, when became unbearable, came in for trenchant criticism by one and all, and the Congress leadership did not hesitate to take steps, in a non-violent way, such steps which should be an eye-opener for the British administration in the province.

Many of the orders passed during the period of Martial Law invariably caused general inconvenience. Under this category were the promulgation of curfew order, restriction on railway travelling and prohibition against people assembling in greater numbers than ten. In fact, the Rowlatt Bills wanted the Government of India to continue to enjoy the same emergency powers, given to them during the war even during peace time. 'We had thus, on the one hand, the offer of reforms by the Montague-Chelmsford scheme, and, on other, the Rowlatt Report proposing to arm the government with extraordinary powers during peace time. The meaning of this dual and contradictory policy was not lost on the people.'

The Martial Law regime had crossed all 'limits of decency' and the honour of any person in the province was unsafe. Besides numerous rules and regulations were applied indiscriminately and innocent persons had to bear the brunt of the hasty and illegal actions of the Martial Law administration. No profession was safe. In the words of Dr. Tara Chand, 'The Martial law regime from 15th of April to 29th of May was a horrie tale of atrocious dealings—commandeering of transport, stopping of free distribution of food to the needy convictions by summary courts, imprisonment, stripes, public flogging, marching students 16 miles a day in the hot midday sun of May etc.... The English officials—civil and military, appeared on the stage in their true colour, with the veneer of civilization suddenly scrubbed out. They were gripped by fear, scared by shadows and behaved like animals at bay, ferocious and blood-thirsty.'

Michael O'Dwyer, General Dyer, Colonel Johnson and other British officials, 'exhibited no sense of shame or remorse' in relating their 'misdeeds' in the form of inhuman atrocities perpetrated on innocent people of the Punjab and instead gave bold and fearless statements before the commission of enquiry. At times their replies were baseless and meaningless. But it clearly appeared that all the British officials were in league with one another in teaching Indians the worst lesson of their life by crushing their sentiments with the use of force hitherto unheard of. Misery was thus thrust upon a major portion of the population of the Punjab and they were cowed down to the utmost. The province was disolate by the Martial Law authorities and the news of the atrocities only 'tricked to the rest of India long afterwards and even then its magnitude was not known to the people of other provinces.'

Before the trials of the prisoners were commenced, gallows were erected in a public place in anticipation of the judges awarding the punishment of hanging. These gallows were erected as near to the scene of the mob outrage as possible. It was elicited in the course of examination that this was done by the order of Michael O'Dwyer. But before the hanging order could be carried out, public hanging was vetoed. This kind of punishment by hanging suggested a serious reflection. Eighteen persons were hanged as a result of the Martial Law trials throughout the province, and many more would have been hanged, but for the strong agitation that was started in many corners of India and the timely and firm stand of Motilal Nehru who entered into cable communication with the Secretary of State, and pending proceedings in appeal, asked for the suspension of death sentence. At this, the Secretary of State also intervened who advised the Viceroy to suspend these death sentence.

The pledge of Gandhi for the inauguration of *satyagraha* was widely acclaimed and signed. It also proved instrumental for fraternisation of Hindus and Muslims, the Hindu leaders being asked to address the people even in mosques. Here was a unique and novel methods of political action by a leader of the largest political party in India who had charisma amongst the masses of the country. His call for non-violent action had caught the imagination of the people who were much impressed by the sincerity of the new leader and the spirituality of the movement which was based on truth and non-violent creed. Undoubtedly, Gandhi's call for *satyagraha* was encountered with all seriousness by the machinery of the government. It was in the Punjab,

however, that this movement met with vehement opposition from the government and a crisis of immense magnitude was in evidence.

There is no doubt that in some places there were serious riots and the mobs committed destruction of life and property in consequence of and as a mark of resentment against the functioning of the British Government in India, but their intention was not to put an end to the British government nor were the means adopted by them calculated to effect that. Their acts may amount in law to waging war under the Penal Code, but it was not rebellion in the sense in which it is ordinarily understood.'

The Government of India entrusted General Dyer with an important assignment after his gruesome venture at Jallianwala Bagh. On 8th May he led his Brigade to the North-West Frontier Province and after three weeks he was ordered to proceed for the relief of Thal. In this expedition Dyer was instrumental in repulsing the Afghan forces operating under the command of Nadir Khan. And soon after the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army eulogised the services rendered by Dyer in this campaign. In October 1919, Dyer was entrusted with the permanent command of a Brigade and exactly after four months, in January, he was promoted to the temporary rank of Divisional Commander. But it is curious to learn that in March 1920 he was ordered to resign his command. This kind of severe action against him was unbelievable for General Dyer. He in fact took up the whole case in a casual way and did not bother to engage a defence counsel when he happened to appear before the Hunter Committee. 'The manner in which he prepared his defence—he did not even ask to be shown the specific charges being made against him—his behaviour towards the Indian members and his low opinion of the proceedings as a whole, all point to this.'

Judged by the terrible and gruesome happenings of April and May in various parts of the Punjab, we get a clear inkling from the rumour prevalent at the time that it was definitely General Dyer's intention to 'raze Amritsar to the ground as a fitting punishment for the horrors of the 10th April committed by the populace. Altogether, towards the latter half of the year 1919, the situation in India—what with the appointment of the Hunter Committee with no Congress representative thereon, and with a Reform Bill which was but a poor performance of a vast promise—was not merely gloomy but portentous.'[41]

The political prisoners fell into two classes—the educated and uneducated. The educated persons were, to a great extent, kept in separate cells; for the most part, they were persons who could afford to pay for special diet, a privilege which is allowed to an undertrial prisoners under the rules.[42] They were not allowed to have cooked food brought from outside, but they could obtain fresh fruit, biscuits and books from outside and also had their own bedding, excluding pillows or thick *razais* which could not be searched. A few had their own camp beds, and hospitals beds were also given to some of them. For food, the jailor arranged three classes of diet, the prices being about one rupee, twelve and ten annas.[43]

Ian Colvin in *The Life of General Dyer* commented. 'When at last he (Sir Michael O'Dwyer) externed Gandhi and deported Kitchlew and Satyapal, he precipitated the trouble he had laboured to avert. For this he had been charged with provocation; but, as he afterwards explained, he acted on the precedent of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh in 1907, and thought, as in that case "their removal far more likely to disorganise an agitation rapidly growing dangerous than to lead to open order'.

It is indeed strange to learn that General Dyer was honoured at the Golden Temple in the presence of a huge gathering. Thus the '...General earned not the confidence only but the love and gratitude of the Sikhs. When he returned to Amritsar, he and his Brigade-Major, Captain Briggs, were summoned to the Golden Temple, and found themselves in the presence of the Chief priests and leaders of the sect.

'Sahib', they said, 'you must become a Sikh even as Nakalseyn Sahib became a Sikh'.

'The General thanked them for the honour, but he objected that he could not as British officer let his hair grow long.

'Arur Singh laughed, 'We will let you off the long hair' he said.

'General Dyer offered another objection, 'But I cannot give up smoking'.

'That you must do' said Arur Singh.

"No" said the General, I am very sorry, but I cannot give up smoking'.

'The priest conceded, "we will let you give it up gradually. 'That I promise you, "said the General, "at the rate of one cigarette a year."

'The Sikhs, chucking, proceeded with the initiation. General Dyer and Captain Briggs were invested with the five *kakas*, the sacred emblems of the war-like brotherhood and so became Sikhs. Moreover, a shrine was built to General Dyer at their holy place, Gur Sat Sultani, and when a few days afterwards came the news that the Afghans were making war upon India, the Sikhs leaders offered the General ten thousand men to fight for the British Raj if only he would consent to command them. General Dyer reported this offer, but it was refused, and a magnificent impulse of loyalty was allowed to fade away'.[44]

This kind of humble and submissive behaviour tinged with the highest degree of loyalty, faithfulness and flattery appear to be questionable from a section of Sikh community. It was performed at a time when a few hundreds of innocent persons of the Punjab were put to death in an inhuman way by the bullets of soldiers—under the command of General Dyer. While the whole nation criticised and condemned of action of General Dyer, both publicly and in writing to the press this kind of treatment of the General is not understandable and one wonders why at all a religious place like the Golden Temple was chosen to honour him. May be that this highest seat of Sikh religion was under the control of those persons who aspired for more favours from the government. It is therefore evident that such an element could go to any limit to please and flatter a British army official unmindful of the fact that he was the perpetrator of ghastly tragedy unprecedented in the history of India. Besides the bulk offer of Sikh soldiers in the Afghan war was an action which could be expected from the same kind of persons who had honoured General Dyer in the Golden Temple. This kind of flattered loyalty was negatived in an indirect way in the end of the same year, when at the session of the Indian National Congress, Pandit Motilal Nehru and other leaders of all-India fame levelled trenchant criticism against the doings of General Dyer and Michael O'Dwyer and pleaded for concerted action for forging unity at all levels so that serious efforts could be made towards achieving the political goal for which the Congress had been aspiring and propagating since long.

It is indeed curious to note about the frank statement which Dyer gave before the Hunter Committee. He not only admitted all the gruesome facts connected with the episode of 13th April, but he boasted of his achievements and sought to justify them in the best possible way. To him it was a 'merciful act' to fire without warning on an inoffensive crowd because it might have made fun of him if he had refrained from doing so.

The findings of the Hunter Committee reveal the fact that there was hardly any justification for the introduction of Martial Law in order to have full control over the existing situation which had not deteriorated as it was thought to be. The committee admitted, 'The wisdom of continuing Martial Law for the whole length of time it remained effective in the Punjab is more open to objection than the original declaration'.

Dyer indeed gave an unconvincing plea before the Disorders Inquiry Committee that the crowd in the Jallianwala Bagh appeared so dense that 'if a determined rush had been made at any time, arms or no arms, my small force must instantly have been overpowered and consequently I was very careful of not giving the mob a chance of organising.'[45]

Dyer also admitted that he had no idea of the exact geography of the *Bagh* and he was unaware of the exits of its campus, 'while standing on the raised platform, he could see the whole *Bagh* and...if the object was that the crowd should disperse then there was no justification for firing towards any other exit'.[46]

An other consideration which weighted heavily on Dyer in deciding to undertake this kind of severe action was mainly guided by the character, thinking and the earlier doings of the people of Punjab whose demobilized soldiers were greatly influenced by the Ghadrites. He had also adopted the nightmarish attitude towards the *Majabi Sikhs,* the *danda* army raised in various towns of the Punjab and the thereat of an Afghan invasion. These elements, he thought, were bent upon overthrowing the British *Raj* and unless stringent measures were adopted, there could be no peace in the region.

From the working of Dyer's mind it appeared that he feared at the moment that a few Europeans living in Amritsar might be wiped out by the violent action of the local population if a timely warning tinged with a severe military action was not operated upon. He thus had in mind the earlier violent happenings in Amritsar and elsewhere in the Punjab when a few Europeans were murdered, banks and post offices were looted and gutted and Miss Sherwood was left for dead in a street.

It is quite obvious that even prior to the firing in the *Bagh* or during and after the firing, Dyer was not mobbed. Nor did he encounter any difficulty which could persuade him to take such a severe action.

Two days earlier, calm and quiet prevailed in the city and no untoward incident was visible to the military administration. The burial of a few dead bodies on 11th April was quite peaceful. The plea of self-defence is also falsified as there was no violent happening, stone-throwing or putting anything to fire.

Puckle, however, mentioned about the state of Dyer's health six months after this massacre. The General told him, 'I haven't had a night's sleep since that happened. I keep on seeing it all over again.'[47] On the basis of this statement, Rupert Furneaux stated in *Massacre at Amritsar* that Dyer was suffering from arterio sclerosis and he 'may have misjudged the position, thinking, that the two waves as they surged back were going to rush him.'[48] Probably by stating so, the innocence of Dyer is being proved. But taking into consideration his health-chart of the last two years, if not more, Dyer was found quite fit both physically and mentally to discharge his numerous and hazardous army duties. His health, of course, began to deteriorate after this event.[49]

It is evident that the first speech in the *Bagh* began at 3 o'clock. Dyer had already taken measure to deal with the situation. As he had made up his mind to teach the local people a lesson, he took no steps to prevent the holding of the meeting nor did he post any kind of prohibitory order on the main gate of the *Bagh*. Besides he took the command of the force himself which in normal circumstances such a small force is commanded by a Captain or a Major and never a senior officer of Dyer's rank.

One could ask a pertinent question about this kind of action by Dyer. Was the crowd gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh armed in any sense? It is quite evident from the numerous witnesses including Dyer that the assembly of people had not weapon or stick in their hands and hence they had no intention of any king of violence on that day. The crowd showed no mood of attacking anybody nor were the violent slogans raised which could provoke the mob against the local administration. This has been clarified by the statement of Michael O'Dwyer before the Hunter Committee. 'Dyer was aware that his retreat might be cut off...he went on firing, but he thought afterwards (he was very frank about it) that was not their intention after seeing the place more fully, and that was one of the methods of egress so as to escape from the *Bagh*' Plomer also stated, 'When there was firing crowds were rushing in the opposite direction'.[51] Therefore, it is quite evident that the people in the *Bagh* never made an attempt to attack the soldiers.

It may be possible to establish Dyer's motive in connection with the kind of action he had executed on 13th April. When he took charge of the whole situation, he was empowered with full authority to establish law and order. Even Miles Irving and Kitchin were not clear to what extent they had abdicated their authority and responsibility. But under the army control, the civil authorities including the police played a subordinate role even during the days when Martial Law was clamped in Amritsar. Under these circumstances, Dyer lost his contact with the civil authorities and did not bother to take their help, advice and support of any kind at the most crucial time. The stern action taken independently by a single individual was the result of the feeling of wielding unlimited power. Had he cared to consult the local officials, the disaster perpetrated by the firing on peaceful, non-violent and unarmed assembly would have been averted.

Valentine Chirol described this tragic incident thus: '...I entered the same narrow lane by which General Dyer...entered with about fifty rifles...The crowd was estimated by him at 6,000, by others at 10,000 and more, but practically unarmed, and all quite defenceless. The panic-stricken multitude broke at once, but for ten consecutive minutes he kept up merciless fusillade, in all 1500 rounds, on that seething mass of humanity, caught like rats in a trap, vainly rushing for the few narrow exits or lying flat on the ground to escape the rain of bullets, which he personally directed to the points where the crowd was thickest. The "targets" to use his own word, were good...he deliberately made up his mind while marching his men to Jallianwala, and would not have flinched from still greater slaughter if the narrowness of the approaches had not compelled him to leave his machinegun behind. His purpose, he declared, was to strike terror into the whole of the Punjab.'[52]

Pearay Mohan in his comprehensive work on *An Imaginary Rebellion* opined that Hans Raj was a secret agent of the local police and that he was instrumental in collecting people at one place so that it might have been easy for General Dyer to deal with them.[53] Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and C.F. Andrews held the same opinion. M.R. Jayakar had the same kind of assessment. 'Of all these facts it is suggested that the meeting had been planned by Hans Raj and his associates with a view to making a large number of people gather at the *Bagh*. Whether the authorities at Amritsar were parties to this plan and yielded to it in their desire for revenge, we are unable to say, as we have not enough evidence before us to support a definite finding. But

it is any rate perfectly clear that Dyer took the fullest advantage of the meeting, in effecting on the inhabitants of Amritsar, as condign and complete a punishment as was needed to satisfy their lust for revenge.'[54]

One question which naturally arises with reference to the administration of Martial Law is, whether the Crown or the military authorities had any power at common law to create any new offences. According to the law in England, they clearly did not possess any such power. Where it was necessary to enable the military authorities to issue any rules or regulations affecting civilians and where it was necessary to treat any infringements as offences, the practice in England had been to confer such powers by statute. The English Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act 1914, expressly conferred power to issue regulations and authorised trial and punishment by courts-martial. It will be interesting to note that by the Defence of the Realm Amendment Act 1915, any person not subject to the naval discipline Act or to military law, who was alleged to be guilty of an offence against any regulations made under the Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act 1914 was entitled to claim to be tried by a civil court with a jury instead of being tried by court-martial.

The officer administering Martial Law in Lahore had issued a large number of proclamations partaking of the character of regulations and providing for the trial and punishment of persons guilty of an infringement of these regulations. These proclamations merely recited that the Government of India has proclaimed Martial Law and that superior military authority had appointed him to administer Martial Law. No other source of authority was quoted and while the officer-incharge was entitled to take measures reasonably necessary for the safety and peace of the area under his command, he had, to all appearance, no valid authority empowering him to create any new offences or try and punish civilians for infringements of his regulations. The Government of India, no doubt, was empowered by the Defence of India Act, IV of 1915, to make rules for securing the public safety and the Defence of British India and to create offences in respect of contraventions of such rules but it did not appear that the Governor-General-in-Council had any power to delegate his powers under Section (2) to the military authorities. We do not know whether the officer administering Martial Law tried and punished any persons for infringements of his regulations, but if he did, his proceedings could not be treated as *ipso facto* valid. A perusal of the different orders passed

by him also created a doubt whether they were called for by the military necessities of the situation or by a desire to strike fear into the minds of the inhabitants by a show of exuberant severity or to secure certain conveniences for the public or particular sections thereof which could have been secured by the civil government. Whatever, might have been the reason of the regulations, any infringement of them could not be an offence unless it was one under some other law.

During the next year when the clouds of the first Non-Co-operation were visible on the political horizon of India, Gandhi had made up his mind to part with the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal and the Zulu War medals awarded to him by the British government for his meritorious services. In a letter to the Viceroy written on 2 August 1920, he was much critical of the British policy in India, particularly its light-hearted treatment which it showed towards General Dyer and Michael O'Dwyer. He stated, 'But the punitive measures taken by General Dyer...were out of all proportions to the crime of the people and amounted to wanton cruelty and inhumanity unparalleled in modern times and...Your Excellency's light-hearted treatment of the official crime your exoneration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Mr. Montagu's dispatch and above all your shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and callous disregard of the feelings betrayed by the House of Lords have filled me with the greatest misgivings regarding the future of Empire, have estranged me completely from the present government and have disabled me from tendering as I have hitherto tendered my loyal cooperation.[55]

Dwyer was known for a violent temper when he was in his teens. Born in Murree near Islamabad and educated in Simla and Sandhurst, he knew India, particularly the Punjab very well. His father had established the Dyer Meakin brewery at Solon.[56] He was thus brought up in an atmosphere which had engendered in him a complex typical of British character. Like many others of his complex typical of British character. Like many others of his time, he was taught that the whites were a superior race which had a Divine Right to rule over India.

Even O'Dwyer was of the firm conviction that India could only be ruled by an iron hand and he had displayed the working of his mind when he had crushed the Ghadr Movement, a few years earlier, by taking very severe action against the revolutionaries. He always showed contempt for 'educated Indians' as he called them trouble-makers. So far so that he lebelled Gandhi as 'an unctuous hypocrite with his ascetic pose'.

For shooting at a mob in the civil area where there is a violent mob in the shape of procession or otherwise, the first and the foremost duty of an official dealing with it is to warn the assembly to disperse. This warning, according to law, is repeated a number of times on the mike or by any other convenient device. Sometime it is thus given to the mob to disperse, run or hide. But if the response is negative, firing is resorted to in the minimum possible magnitude, avoiding, as far as possible, serious injury tantamount to death. In this case, neither any kind of warning was announced nor the norms of the use of minimum force were adhered to. The callousness in which the orders were given to shoot down a few hundred persons in the *Bagh* does not justify, with any amount of argument, by the perpetrator of the ghastly crime or by any of his supporter and sympathiser.

For such a severe action against a peaceful assembly in the *Bagh*, one could remark that General Dyer was one of the unimaginative generals who probably had the confirmed belief that it was his bounden duty to defend the *Raj* by any method however severe, harsh and violent it might be. One would also say that the General might have thought to win military laurels for himself by silencing the innocent unarmed people to death. Such a thinking or a plan proved a sort of boomerang for him and instead of gaining any laurel, he had to pay a heavy price for it.

The massacre no doubt shot India to its depths but the British Raj ended after a consistent struggle for about two-and-a-half decades till it achieved its desired goal in 1947.

REACTION

When the news of the tragic event percolated out of Punjab, India was convulse, and there was an outburst of cirticism and condemnation and a serious expression of the sense of dissatisfaction and anger against the British *Raj* for its inability to maintain perfect law and order without using illegal, highly questionable, inhuman , treacherous and atrocious means. There arose quick and spontaneous demands from numerous quarters of the country for the recall of Michael O'Dwyer and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India Severe and drastic punishments were called for General Dyer and other administrators of a Martial Law and the immediate release of political and other innocent prisoners arrested and convicted before and during the Martial laws.

E.S. Montagu had the realisation of the wrong that was done to the people of the Punjab and was also conscious of the danger in continuing the policy and methods of terrorism and ruling the people by the sword. He soon found out that his entire scheme of constitutional reforms for India was at stake and therefore thought it prudent to agree to hold an enquiry into the civil disturbances.

General Dyer was cashiered and his action was condemned by a majority in the House of Commons. The House of Lords, however, vindicated him by a majority vote. A huge fund was raised in England: the collected amount along with a sword was presented to him as a mark of approbation of his military services in India by his friends and well-wishers.

It is interesting to note the contents of the Manifesto on the situation in India unanimously adopted by the delegates from the Indian National Congress in the autumn of 1919, soon after the appointment of the Hunter Commission and when the Reform Bill was before the House of Commons.

'...So far as a new claim is concerned, the Government of India since the Armistice has requited India's glorious services by legislative and administrative repression, depriving India of freedom of the press, freedom of speech, provoking public protest and riots, particularly in the Punjab, with Martial Law, deportation of leaders beloved by the people, confiscation of property, suppression of newspapers, execution, public flogging, imprisonment of prominent and patriotic citizens on fantastic charges, refusal of permission to choose counsel for their defence before Military Tribunals, shooting by machineguns and bombing by military planes of defenceless men and women...a regime of blood and iron which, if practised by Germans, would have filled Englishmen with horror and indignation.'

On 18 April 1919, Gandhi gave a press statement in which he suggested the temporary suspension of *satyagraha.* He was indeed not very happy while giving such an advice. 'It is not without sorrow that I feel compelled to advise the temporary suspension of civil disobedience. I give this advice not because I have less faith now in its efficacy, but because I have, if possible, greatest faith than before. It is my perception of the law of *satyagraha* which impels me to suggest the suspension. I am sorry, when I embarked upon a mass movement, I underrated the forces of evil and I must now pause and consider how best to meet the

situation. But whilst doing so, I wish to say that from a careful examination of the tragedy at Ahmedabad and Viramganm, I am convinced that *satyagraha* had nothing to do with the violence of the mob and that many swarmed round the banner of mischief raised by the mob, largely because of their affection for Anasuyabai and myself. Had the government in an unwise manner not prevented me from entering Delhi and so compelled me to disobey their order, I feel certain that Ahmedabad and Viramagam would have remained free from the horrors of the past week. In other words, *satyagraha* has neither been the cause nor the occasion of the upheaval. If anything, the presence of *satyagraha* has acted as a check even so slight upon the previously existing lawless elements. As regards events in the Punjab, it is admitted that they are unconnected with the *satyagraha* movement.

'*Satyagraha* is like a banyan tree with innumerable branches. Civil Disobedience is one such branch, *satya* (truth) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) together make the parent trunk from which all innumerable branches shoot out. We have found by bitter experience that whilst in an atmosphere of lawlessness, civil disobedience can worthily spring, have commanded little or no respect. Ours, then, is a Herculean Task, but we may not shirk it. We must fearlessly spread the doctrine of *satya* and *ahimsa* and then, and not till then, shall we be able to undertake mass *satyagraha.*

My attitude towards the Rowlatt legislation remains unchanged. Indeed, I do feel that the Rowlatt legislation is one of the many causes of the present unrest. But in a surcharged atmosphere, I must refrain from examining these causes. The main and only purpose of this letter is to advise all Satyagrahis to temporarily suspend civil disobedience, to give government effective cooperation in restoring order and by preaching and practice to gain adherence to the fundamental principles mentioned above.

I have been accused of throwing lighted matches. If my occasional Civil Resistance be a lighted match, Rowlatt legislation and persistence in retaining it on the Statute-book are a thousand matches scattered throughout India, and the only way to avoid Civil Resistance altogether is to withdraw that legislation. Nothing that the Government have published in justification of that legislation has moved the Indian public from the attitude of opposition to it.

I have thus suspended Civil Resistance to hasten the end of that legislation. But *satyagrahis* will pay for its removal by their lives if it cannot be removed by lesser means. The period of suspension is for *satyagrahis* an opportunity for further discipline in an enlightened and willing obedience to the laws of the State. The right of Civil Resistance is derived from the duty of obedience voluntarily performed. And *satyagraha* consists not merely, or even chiefly, in civil resisting laws, but mainly in promoting national welfare to strict adherence to Truth. I would respectfully advise fellow-*satyagrahis* and seek the cooperation of all great and small in the propagation of pure *swadeshi* and promotion of HIndu-Muslim unity. *Swadeshi* is, I hold, a necessity of national existence. No Englishman or Indian can view with equanimity the huge enforced waste of the labour of twenty crore peasants during half the year. The labour can be quickly and immediately utilized only by restoring to the women their spinning-wheels and to the men their handlooms. This means the elimination of unnatural Lancashire interest and the Japanese menace. The elimination of the Japanese menace will avert a national and Imperial disaster. Extension of Japan's hold upon India through her commerce can end only in India's degradation or a bloody war.

The Hindu-Muslim unity is equally a national and Imperial necessity. A voluntary league between Hindus, Mohammedans and Englishmen is a league in my conception infinitely superior to and purer than the League of Nations just formed. Permanent union between the Hindus and Mohammedans is the preliminary to such triple union. That unity can be materially advanced by the Hindus whole-heartedly associating themselves with the Mohammedans in their very just aspirations regarding the Caliphate, holy Mecca and other holy places of Islam.

The *Swadeshi* propaganda and work for Hindu-Muslim unity require powers of organization, honesty of purpose, integrity in trade, and immense self-sacrifice and self-restraint. It is therefore, easy enough to perceive that *swadeshi* propaganda on the purest lines and promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity cannot but have an indirect, thought nonetheless, bearing on the movement for securing withdrawal of the Rowlatt legislation for which the government can claim no justification—little as they can claim even now—when we give an unexampled demonstration of the qualities named above.[57]

On 31 May 1919, Rabindranath Tagore informed the Viceroy that he might be relived of his title of Knighthood in view of the policy followed by government in dealing with the troubles in the Punjab.[58] 'The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has, with a rude shock, revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India. The disproportionate severity of the punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out. We are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilised governments, barring some conspicuous exceptions, recent and remote....Considering that such treatment has meted out to a population, disarmed and resourceless, by a power which has the most terribly efficient organisation for destruction of human lives, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification. The accounts of insults and sufferings undergone by our brothers in Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers, possibly congratulating themselves for what they imagine as salutary lessons...Knowing that our appeals have been in vain and that the passion of vengeance is blinding the nobler vision of statesmanship in our government, which could so easily afford to be magnanimous as befitting its physical strength and moral tradition, the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon my self in giving voice to the poorest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stands shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so called insignificance, are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings.

'These are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask Your Excellency, with due deference and regret, to relieve me of my title of Knighthood which I had the honour to accept from His Majesty the King at the hands of your predecessor, for whose nobleness of heart I still entertain great administration.'

Exactly after a week of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the members of the All India Congress Committee held a crucial meeting on 20-21 April in Bombay under the presidentship of no less a leader than Madan Mohan Malaviya.[60] The significant resolutions passed were as follows.

The AICC protested against the passing of the Rowlatt Act and urged upon the Secretary of State for India to advise His Majesty the King Emperor to disallow it. It emphatically deplored and condemned all acts of violence against persons and property which were committed at Amritsar and other places and appealed to the people to maintain law and order and to help in the restoration of public tranquillity and it urged upon the government to deal with the situation in a sympathetic and conciliatory manner, immediately reversing the policy of repression.[61]

It placed on record the strong condemnation of the order passed under the Defence of India Act against a person of such 'wellknown noble character and antecedents' as Mahatma Gandhi. It requested the government to withdraw its own order for peaceful atmosphere in the country.[62]

At the special session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay in August-September 1918, the Congress condemned the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee which....'if given effect to, will interfere with the fundamental rights of the Indian people and impede the healthy growth of public opinion'.[63]

C.R. Das forcefully supported this resolution and reacted thus: 'I find it somewhat difficult to understand why, at a time when the whole country was agitated over the question of self-government and over the rights of self-determination, while the whole country from one end to another was engaged in political struggle to realise their rights, at such a time the government should have thought it fit to engage itself in forging new weapons for the oppression of the people. (Cries of "Shame"). You have heard that according to the government there is a Revolutionary Party in this country. I for one do not deny that there is such a party, and new weapons which are being forged under cover of the recommendations of this committee are for the purpose of crushing that Revolutionary Party. But you find that nowhere in the history of the world at any time any repressive measures, have put a stop to revolutionary movements. Our complaint is that the government of this country has not given proper attention to the question. The government of this country has not investigated the causes of the existence of this Revolutionary Party. It is an evil, I admit; it has got to be eradicated, but this is not the way to do it. (Hear, hear.) Give them rights. Self-Government is the only remedy. (Applause.) And to show to you that the Government never intended to investigate into the causes of this revolutionary movement, I cannot do better than read to you the

Government Resolution which appointed this Committee. That resolution says: 'The Governor-General-in-Council has with the approval of the Secretary of State decided to appoint a committee.' To do what? "To investigate and report on the nature and extend of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement, to examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies, and to advise as to what legislation, if any, is necessary to enable government to deal effectively with them."

"The government is not anxious to enquire into the causes, but the committee which was appointed has gone out of their way to enquire into the causes. They conducted the investigation at a period when the whole country was angry with the government for its repressive measures. They take this enquiry from that point of time and have come to the conclusion—a shameless conclusion—that this revolutionary movement is due to the political activities of a certain section of our politicians. The honoured name of Lokamanya Tilak (Cheers) and of Bipin Chandra Pal (Cheers) are mentioned in this Report, and they also refer to the writings in the newspapers which they say inflamed the minds of this Revolutionary Party. Pray, why don't you go a step beyond that? Why don't you go and enquire as to why those speakers spoke in the way you deprecate and condemn? Have you not been oppressing the people of this country for the last hundred and fifty years? (Hear, hear.) Did you ever think of any reform? It is not a fact that very time the question of reform was brought up, the bureaucracy in this country stoutly opposed it? (Cries of "Shame.") Did you ever pay any attention to the rights of the peoples? (Cries of no, no.) Have you not, under cover of the Defence of India Act which was passed as a war measure, sent hundreds of people to the prison without trail? (Cries of "Shame".) Now this committee has recommended more drastic measures still. (Cries of "Shames") I feel this so much, because I have been associated with the agitation against this internment policy. In Bengal, it is a living cry. You do not probably feel it so much in other provinces, but everything which happens in one province is a matter of veiy great importance to the other provinces. (Hear, hear.) I welcome this Resolution because it ratifies the creed of the National Assembly and ratifies the validity of all our agitation against the internment policy of the Government.'

The Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government informed the Home Secretary, Government of India on 19 June, 1919:

'I am directed to ask that a direction be issued by the Governor-General-in-Council to the effect that Sections 3 to 14 of the Defence of India (Criminal Law Amendment) Act 1915, shall come into operation in the Jhelum and Mianwali districts of the Punjab at once.'

In each of these two districts there was a 'serious case ready for trial' connected with the recent disturbances. There was a railway strike at Kundian on the 14th and 15th of April. The leaders were the sub-assistant surgeon and certain members of the station staff. A meeting was held and the mob went to the station and stopped a train from proceeding by refusing to allow the engine to leave the shed. Stones were thrown and inflammatory speeches were delivered. Several instruments were disconnected.[64]

On 24 June, 1919, under the auspices of the *Satyagraha Sabha* a public meeting was held at the Morarji Gokuldas Hall in Bombay to protests against the Rowlatt Act and Bill and B.G. Horniman's deportation. Gandhi presided. Two resolutions the first against the Rowlatt Act and the Bill, and the second against the deportation of Horniman were passed. It was made clear that at such *satyagraha* meetings, it was desirable that all the speakers should be *satyagrahis.*[65] 'Gandhi then said if they could hold similar meetings all over India and conduct them in as orderly a manner as they had done that night, the government would have to cancel their order against Mr. Horniman. Let the people do their duty and the government would have to do theirs. Let them hold meetings and pass similar resolutions, and their objects be easily attained.'[66]

On the same day Gandhi telegraphically informed E.S. Montague about his decision of this nature. He clearly elaborated the reasons for such an action. 'I feel I ought to inform you that unless circumstances alter situation I propose resuming of civil disobedience early July. With me it is a creed. Governments whether alien or indigenous will sometime grievously err even to extent flouting public opinion as has happened in case Rowlatt legislation. In such case discontent must either take form criminal disobedience and anarchical crime or may be and can be directed healthy channel by civil disobedience which is nothing but partial or total withdrawal of support by civil resisters from government in an orderly manner and without anger or ill-will. I wish, however, that Rowlatt legislation could be withdrawn and committee of inquiry be appointed to investigate causes disturbances Punjab and administration Martial law with power to revise sentences and that

Kalinath Roy, Editor, 'Tribune' be released. I have already sent letter Viceroy requesting above-mentioned relief.'[67]

The Government of India took a serious view of the resumption of any kind of propaganda in the form of a movement by the Congress. The Home Secretary, Government of Bombay informed Gandhi on 20 July, 'I am to inform you that the Government of India have desired His Excellency the Governor of Bombay to convey to you a grave warning of the consequences which must inevitably be anticipated from the resumption of any action or propaganda involving disobedience of the law and of the heavy moral responsibility that must lie on those who take or advise this course.

'In making this communication to you, I am to say that His Excellency would add a further warning that any assumption that such action can be undertaken without most serious consequences to the public security, is entirely unwarranted by the situation in this presidency.'[68]

Next day, Gandhi gave up the idea of the resumption of civil resistance. For this important decision he gave reasons published in the issue of *Young India* on 23 July 1919. Gandhi opined, 'the Government of India have given me, through His Excellency the Governor of Bombay grave warning that resumption of Civil Disobedience is likely to be attended with serious consequences to the public security. This warning has been enforced by His Excellency the Governor himself at interviews to which I was summoned. In response to this warning and to the urgent desire publicly expressed by Dewan Bahadur Govinda Raghava Iyer, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar and several editors, I have, after deep consideration, decided not to resume Civil Resistance for the time being. I may add that several prominent friends belonging to what is called the Extremist Party have given me the same advice on the sole ground of their fear of recrudescence of violence on the part of those who might not have understood the doctrine of Civil Resistance. When, in common with most other *satyagrahis,* I came to the conclusion that the time was ripe for the resumption of the Civil Resistance part of *satyagraha*, I sent a respectful letter to His Excellency, the Viceroy, advising him of my intention to do so and urging that Rowlatt Legislation should be withdrawn, that an early declaration be made as to the appointment of a strong and impartial committee to investigate the Punjab disturbances with power to revise the sentences passed, and that Babu Kalinath Roy who was, as could be proved from the record of the case, unjustly

convicted, should be released. The Government of India deserve thanks for the decision[69] in Mr. Roy's case. Though it does not do full justice to Mr. Roy, the very material reduction in the sentence is a substantial measure of justice. I have been assured that the Committee of Inquiry, such as I have urged is in the process of being appointed. With these indications of goodwill, it would be unwise on my part not to listen to the warning given by the government. Indeed, my acceptances of the Government's advice is a further demonstration of the true nature of Civil Resistance. A civil resister never seeks to embarrass government. He often cooperates and does not hesitate civil to resist where resistance becomes a duty. He attains the goal by creating goodwill being ultimately returned by the government. Further suspension of Civil Resistance is, therefore, nothing but a practical application of *satyagraha.*

'Yet it is not small matter for me to suspend Civil Resistance even for a day while Rowlatt legislation continues to disfigure our Statute—book. The Lahore and Amritsar judgements make suspension still more difficult. Those judgements read by me with an unbiased mind, have left an indelible impression that most of the Punjab leaders have been convicted without sufficient proof and that the punishments inflicted on them are inhuman and outrageous. The judgements go to show that they have been convicted for no other reason than that they were connected with stubborn agitation against the Rowlatt legislation. I would, if I had my way, have, therefore, preferred to court imprisonment to retaining the restricted liberty vouchsafed to me by the Government of India. But a *satyagrahi* has to swallow many a bitter pill and the present suspension is one such. I feel that I shall better serve the country and the government and those Punjabi leaders who, in my opinion, have been so unjustly convicted and so cruelly sentenced, by suspension of Civil Resistance for the time being.

'But this suspension, while it lightens my responsibility by reason of the feared outbreak of violence, makes it incumbent upon the Government and the eminent public men who have advised suspension to see that the Rowlatt legislation is removed without delay.'

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu stated in a speech before a huge gathering in Bombay. 'We are all poor people earning a few annas a day. We do not understand politics. We understand what we mean by our honour? In fighting Rowlatt Bills we are fighting for our honour.' She told the mill-hands that the Rowlatt Act trampled under foot their right of independence and that by passing it government made them slaves.[50]

'In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 2 of the Bengal State Offences Regulations, 1804, the Governor-General-in-Council is pleased to cancel the orders of the Government of India in the Home Department dated the 13th of April 1919, the 15th of April 1919, the 19th of April and the 22nd of April which were published with the Notifications of the Punjab Government Nos. 11877, 11878, 11879 11880 dated the 1st May 1919, suspending the functions of the ordinary criminal courts of judicature and establishing Martial Law within the districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwal and Gujrat in the province of Punjab.'[51]

In a public meeting held at Allahabad on 17 September 1919, Pandit Motilal Nehru criticised the administrative measures undertaken by the Punjab government under Michael O'Dwyer. The audience consisted of the elite of the town including persons like Jaikaran Nath Misra, Pandit Sham Nath Mushran, Pandit and Mrs. Shamlal Nehru, Pandit Jagjivan Nath Takru, Syed Haidar Mehdi, Pandit Mohanlal Nehru, Babu Purshotam Das Tandon and many others.[52] Motilal Nehru expressed his feelings thus:

Gentlemen, never have we met on these grounds to consider a more serious question than the one that confronts us this afternoon. We have in the near and the remote past raised our voice against legislative, administrative and other measures of the Government which we considered prejudicial to our interests. We have frequently met here to claim responsible government and the right of self-determination which we consider is our birth-right. We have often assembled here to denounce the 'Black Act' the ugly blot which no amount of official special leading or camouflage can cover up. In a word, we have met here often and often to ventilate many grievances, big and small, but never have we been brought face to face with a question of such tremendous gravity and magnitude as the one we have to consider this afternoon. I may at once tell you that it is a question which not only affects our liberties but also affects our very lives—our right to live and our right to breathe God's air. That is a real question before you. Now in the concrete form what does that question come to? It is a question which relates to certain incidents which have recently happened in the Punjab and to certain contemplated legislation which is to be undertaken in regard to these occurrences. That legislation is also to be confined to the Punjab. Now it has been said in several quarters, responsible and irresponsible, that this is an affair of the Punjab and where do we of the United Provinces

come in? Indeed a wellknown gentleman of the Punjab, known to fame as the gallant knight of Tiwana, has recently been assuring in the Imperial Council that the Punjabees themselves make no grievance of it, that it is only certain outside busy bodies and agitators who have made it their business to exploit the grateful Punjab, for their own political aims. Now, gentlemen, grateful Punjab, grateful indeed it is, according to the gallant knight, because in his opinion it was saved from the brink of the precipice, and the authorities have by the promptitude of action taken, saved it from a dire catastrophe which promised a recurrence of the dark days of 1857. Now, gentlemen, as I have said, there is no doubt that the question directly relates to Punjab, although, of course it is quite a different matter whether Punjabees have any reason to be grateful or not for the treatment that has been accorded to them. I shall try to show you that the question is one of all-India importance, and affects the well-being of the whole country.

'I shall in very few words tell you what it means and also what it implies. It means, gentlemen that the people of India, not only of the Punjab but of India as a whole have raised a clear cut issue between themselves and the Government of India and that of the Punjab—in fact an issue between themselves and the autocratic bureaucracy which governs them. They frankly and freely declare that this bureaucracy has failed to fulfil the trust reposed in it by the British democracy. They charge that bureaucracy with nothing short of oppressive cruelty, in suppressing such disorder as they prevail in the Punjab. Now that, gentlemen, surely is not a question which by any stretch of language can be said to be confined to this part of the country or to that. If the government has failed in its duty so egregiously in one province what guarantee is there that it shall not fail in similar conditions in another province? While that is a question which is to be tried, it goes without saying that is a question of this nature can only be tried by an independent tribunal, a tribunal which can hold the scale evenly between parties and not a tribunal chosen by one of the parties. The people of India have raised this clear cut issue. As I have said they offer to submit to the judgement of an independent tribunal but the judgment of no other.

This, gentlemen, is the question and this is the meaning of the conditions which will be proposed before you presently. But they mean a great deal more. The necessary implication as that if the people succeeded in making out their case, if they show that the bureaucracy betrayed its trust on an occasion like the one we have witnessed in

Punjab then they make out a case for the immediate replacing of that bureaucracy by another form of government, most suited to the times and to the conditions under which we live. I shall not on this occasion say what the form of that government would be because that is a very large question which has been discussed on many a platform. But for my present purpose it is enough as form of government under which we live is not the form which can possibly continue, if the people of India make out the charge that they deliberately, freely, frankly and openly bring against the government. Then it is to be seen what will be the consequence if they fail to make out the charge. Now as I have said, it is an issue, which has been raised in such an acute form that it is to be decided either in favour of or against the people of India, and they are perfectly prepared to take the decision whichever way it is proved, only if it is a decision arrived at by an impartial and independent committee of enquiry. The result of their failure will be that the bureaucracy such as it is will have established its claim to continue to govern us for such time as we are not able to prove that we are capable of rendering a better account of ourselves. But if on the contrary the bureaucracy fails, I say and say without hesitation that it must go at once with all the glittering paraphernalia and bubbles which surround it with the rainbow colours that form a halo round it—a rainbow which is neither preceded nor followed by actual rain. But, gentlemen, if they have to go, they must, and this is the attitude I wish you to consider and if you agree with me to adopt at this meeting. Now this is a question which must in the very nature of things be decided by real judges and not by bogus judges under inspiration. Sir William Vincent in the course of a recent debate in the Imperial Council vehemently denied the charge that the Government of India was on its trial. I say he was perfectly correct in saying so. If that charge is to be inquired by a committee appointed by the Government of India itself, it is inconceivable that the authority appointing a tribunal or commission can be judged by that commission or authority. Therefore, we say that we want a tribunal or authority which will meet even-handed justice between the two parties.

Now, gentlemen, I will give only a few facts and these facts will bring home to you the undeniable truth of what I have been submitting so far. I maintain that the Government of India is not only the most interested party in this matter, but that it has behaved and is behaving in a manner which identifies it with one of the parties in the most unmistakable manner. Indeed the manner in which the government has

behaved will do little credit even to a party of ordinary litigants in a court. And that I am going to establish to your satisfaction by that has passed, recently in the Imperial Council. Now what is the point of difference between the parties? The Government of India, on the one hand seeks to justify what has been done in Punjab by executive on the plea of the necessity to maintain law and order. That is the case of the Government of India and of the Government of Punjab. The people of India, on the other hand, maintain that such disorder as there has been was the result of the inaptitude of the authorities themselves. It has handled the whole situation by sheer incompetence, it for no more serious reason. That is the issue, and how is each party to substantiate his case? It can only be done by going into facts and the actual circumstances and that in broad daylight. Now what is the position that the government adopts? The government begins by appointing a Committee of Enquiry. It is a committee which is yet to assemble and you cannot possibly expect that committee to do strict justice.

'The government is now passing what is called an Indemnity Bill (cries of shame) and what in common parlance is nothing but a white-washing bill. That is the attitude of the government. I should like to ask what will it be that the committee which they have themselves appointed will have to decide after this legislation? Even if it comes to the finding that the executive is in error what are to be the consequences of it, when the executive has been exculpated in advance of the result of that finding? Now then look to the other side of the shield—what is th case for the people and how it has been presented? The representative of the people, and I am sure you will all area with me when I say that there can be no truer and no more genuine representative of the people than our hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who has gone up to the Legislative Council of India, not to the Government of India as a party, but to the Legislative Council of India. He has thus to a certain extent, rather a great extent, but let me warn the authorities not to the full extent, told them what is the case of the people against them. He gives them opportunity to explain matters so that the parties may go to trial only on such questions upon which there may be any real difference of opinion.

'But how does the Government of India behave? Now, gentlemen, it is, obvious what the functions of the Government in its Legislative Council are. Has not government on this point to give such information as is of public interest? But the Government behaves not like the

government that it is an should be but like a party that it wants to be. Out of 91 questions it accepts only 9 to give answers to. It reserves 8 for consideration not saying whether it will answer them or not and disallows 74 questions. And why? Because, in its opinion, it is not in the public interest to answer them. Now, gentlemen, I will presently mention some of these questions to you. By this I do not seek to minimize the importance of others. The time is limited and you have read it for yourselves and it will be for you to say whether those questions are questions which should have been disallowed in the public interest. Now, let me first take the questions which have been allowed and which have been answered. I may adopt this course as it will have the effect of explaining to you the case which the people wish to make. Now, gentlemen, the very first question which was put had a number of subordinate questions for answer. The hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya asked for a statement to be laid on the table showing among other things, the number of persons actually arrested and detained in custody in connection with the recent disturbances classified according to town, or village, showing the name, percentage, class and the residence of the persons arrested or detained. Now what is the reply? The reply given is: "Information is not available." Now, gentlemen, you know that even in the case of criminal tribes who wander about from place to place, even when one or a large number of them is arrested, there are always records kept and the authorities can always tell how many have been arrested, how long they have been kept in custody and why they were eventually punished or convicted. But in the case of thousands of respectable men who were arrested and detained the government gave no information, whatever. What does that signify? I say, it shows the incompetence of the government—a government which gives full powers to the police and the subordinate executive to take hold of any one they can—hands upon and the same government when it is called upon only to give the number, the names and the description of persons who were arrested or detained says unblushingly in the Council Chamber that they have no information on this point. Why are you there, I say,—if you have no information? Let somebody come whose business it will be to give information.

'Then another part of the same question related to persons who have been arrested and released without trial. The answer was the same—"No information is available". To play with the liberaties of the subjects may be a very interesting or amusing game to the authorities.

But I make bold to say that it will be condemned by the whole of the civilized world. These answers were bound to evoke some supplementary questions by the tribune of the people who put them. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya with regard to answer to a part of this question that information is not available asked: "Am I to understand that the number of persons...is not know to the Government." Look at the answer. In reply Sir., William Vincent said: 'That is correct.' The number of persons arrested is not known to the Government of India. Now the implication from the elusive way of answering the question is that it should be addressed to the Government of Punjab or to the Inspector-General of Police. Why should we bother about the arrest of thousands of persons? The Panditji put a supplementary question: "May I request that the government be pleased to ask for that they want notice of this question. Here is a request directly made but the answer given is: "I ask for the notice of this question."

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya reacted to the promulgation of Martial Law and the atrocities of various kinds perpetrated on people of the Punjab during the regime of Michael O'Dwyer. He asked reaching questions in the Legislative Assembly meeting on 10 September 1919 and to some of them he was able to receive reply from the treasury benches. He asked about (a) the number of persons actually arrested and detained in custody in connection with the disturbances in the Punjab, classified according to town or village, and showing the names, percent age, caste, profession and place of residence of the persons arrested or detained; (b) the number of persons out of the above list who were actually put on trial; (i) before the commissions constituted under the Martial Law Ordinance of 1919 promulgated by the Governor-General; (ii) before the Summary Courts established under the orders for the General Officers Commanding the Lahore and Rawlapindi Divisions; (iii) before the Area Officers constituted by or in virtue of the powers conferred by the General Officer Commanding the Lahore and Rawalpindi Divisions for offences against the Proclamation issued on the 19th April 1919, (iv) before the ordinary Municipal Courts in districts where Martial Law was not declared; and (v) before the Special Tribunal constituted under the Defence of India Act.[72]

William Vincent stated as follows;

(a) The information is not available.

(b) The following are the figures reported. It is possible that some small modifications may be found necessary.

(i) 852; (ii) 1437; (iii) 564; (iv) 13; (v) 56.

Malaviya again asked about the number of persons who were killed during disturbances. William Vincent replied:[73]

The numbers killed in each district so far as has been ascertained were as follows—

Lahore	14
Amritsar	301
Gujranwala	17
Gujarat	2
Total :	334

Madan Mohan Malaviya further asked—[74]

"Will Government be pleased to lay on the table lists of persons who after being sentenced by Martial Law Commissioners or other Martial Law Officers in connection with the recent disturbances were—

(a) executed,

(b) tansported, or

(c) confined in the Lahore Central and Borstal Jails and various District Jails in the Punjab?"[75]

William Vincent replied—

"The figures asked for are given below:

(a) 18 persons

(b) 26 persons.

(c) The number of persons in the Punjab Jails are distributed as under—

Multan District Jail	30
Multan Central Jail	79
Jullundur District Jail	29
Amritsar	1
Ludhiana	15
Lyallpur	50
Ferozepore	41
Compbellpur District Jail	3

Dhariwal Jail	11
Lahore Borstal Jail	189
Lahore Central Jail	503
Gujranwala District Jail	41
Sialkot District Jail	26
Montgomery District Jail	34
Rawalpindi District Jail	149
Shahpur District Jail	4
Delhi District Jail	6
Gurdaspur District Jail	18
Total	1,226

Madan Mohan Malaviya asked—[76]

"Will Government be pleased to give the names, ages, and other particulars of persons, if any, who were flogged on being arrested and subsequently put on their trial in what is known as the Sherwood case of Amritsar?" William Vincent replied—[77]

"Six of the persons accused of the assault on Miss Sherwood were convicted of disorderly conduct while in custody and were sentenced on conviction by a Summary Court to two years' imprisonment and whipping. These offences were entirely separate from the assault on Miss Sherwood. Further details are not available."

Madan Mohan Malaviya asked—[78]

"(1) Will government be pleased to state—

(a) the number of persons, if any, who were sent under Marital Law to the Central Jail, Lahore, to be flogged there and were actually flogged;

(b) the authority under whose orders they were so flogged; and

(c) whether there is a record of all such cases of flogging?

(2) If there is such a record, will government be pleased to lay it on the table?"

William Vincent replied:

"(a) Number of persons actually flogged

(b) Authority under whose orders they were flogged—58

By Deputy Commissioner, Lahore	7
By Officer Commanding, Lahore Civil Area	31
By First Class Magistrates	12
By Martial Law Commissions	8
Total	58

(c) There is a record in the Lahore Central Jail, but it is not proposed to lay it on the table."[79]

Jawharlal Nehru, at that time a youngman of hardly thirty years of age and an up-coming energetic youthful Congress leader, went to Amritsar along with Pandit Motilal Nehru in August 1919 to collect first-hand information regarding the targedy in Jallianwala Bagh. He reached there on 31st August and met Lala Girdhari Lal, with whom he drove through the city and saw ruins of National Bank, Town Hall and Post Office. He recorded, 'Visited Jallianwala Bagh—walked round and saw numerous bullet marks. Counted 67 on one part of one wall. There must have been at least 200 on the walls I saw (I need not examine all walls). Changes being made in the garden—Walls raised—Wooden planks put up—A lot of earth being thrown up etc.—Many bullet marks very high up—One bullet mark on a balcony just outside the bagh facing lane over canal—Most peculiar—could only have been fired at from the lane or else the bullet bounced off.

'Visited the Lane[80] where people were made to crawl[81] on their bellies. Told that one respectable woman raped in a nighbouring house. General misbehaviour of tommies.

'Passed footbridge, carriage bridge over railway line, telegraph office etc. Where firing took place.'[82]

'People were reticent—would not give us any information at first. Gradually we inspired a little confidence—took down several statements. The *gali*[83] said to have contained about 250 corpses after the firing. Examined all the nighbouring roofs of houses for bullet marks. Found many of them—some very high up.

Remarkable case of little boy aged 5 or so who remained on open roof through firing and escaped unhurt! Thought they were fireworks! Walls round riddled with bullets.

'Visited other houses in neighbourhood. Some important statements recorded...

'Conflicting testimony about presence of machinegun or a 'Lawis' gun. Also as to exact position taken up by firing parties. One person gives very circumstantial account of some quick firing gun with a large bore being used. Others deny having seen it,'[84]

When Nehru travelled back from Amritsar to Delhi by the night train, the compartment he entered was almost full and all the berths, except one upper one, were occupied by sleeping passengers. He took the vacant upper berth and in the morning he found to his surprise that all his fellow-passengers were military officers. 'They conversed with each other in loud voices which I could not help overhearing. One of them was holding forth in an aggressive and triumphant tone and soon I discovered that he was Dyer, the hero of Jallianwala Bagh, and he was describing his Amritsar experiences. He pointed out how he had the whole town at his mercy and he had left like reducing the rebellious city to a heap of ashes, but he took pity on it and refrained. He was evidently coming back from Lahore after giving his evidence before the Hunter Committee of Inquiry. I was greatly shocked to hear his conversation and to observe his callous manner. He descended at Delhi station in *pyjamas* with bright pink stripes, and a dressing gown.'[85]

While opening the debate in the House of Commons,[86] Edwin Montague made it clear to the members that his main aim was to seek the endorsement of the decision against General Dyer already approved by the cabinet, the Hunter Committee, the Commander-in-Chief in India and the Army Council.

After Montague finished his speech, Edward Carson rose and he tried to defend Dyer's action. Calling him a gallant soldier, he doubted if he was properly treated and would have a fair trial. Commenting on Montague's statement, he opined, 'You talk of the great principles of liberty which you have laid down. General Dyer has a right to be brought within those principles of liberty, and has no right to be broken on the *ipse dixit* of any commission or committee, however great, unless he has been fairly tried—and he has not been tried...For heaven's sake, when you put a soldier into these difficult positions, do not visit upon him punishment for attempting to deal to the best of his ability with a situation for which he is not in the slightest degree responsible. If he makes an error of judgement, approach it with the full idea that if he is *bonafide* and you can see it impossible for him in the circumstances to have calmly made up his mind in the way you would do, then you may censure him, but do not punish him. Do not break him.'[87]

Churchill was critical of the action of Dyer. He called this episode without any precedent or parallel in the modern history of the British Empire. He opined: 'It is an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation...Our reign in India or anywhere else has never rested on a basis of physical force above, and would be fatal to the British Empire to try to base ourselves only upon it.' He recommended severe disciplinary action against Dyer and felt that loss of employment and censure would not be enough.[88]

William Joynson—Hicks criticised the views expressed by Montagu and called his speech as the most disastrous in its contents, He stated, 'I am prepared to say that General Dyer was right....I am convinced there was real rebellion in the Punjab and that General Dyer saved India.'[89]

The attack on Montague was made by Rupert Gwynne who retorted, 'Charges are foul civilians, but they are not foul when made against soldiers. General Dyer is disgraced after thirty-four years' service without trial. When the Right Honourable Member is criticised in this House he says the charges are foul. At any rate he is not losing his office. I wish he were.'[90]

Colonel Josiah Wedgwood stated—

'I want to raise the question of the Amritsar massacre, and the duty of this country towards India in that respect. The details of that massacre are unfortunately too wellknown to us. The English press, with few exceptions, has taken the English view of the matter. The whole country has been horrified at what took place. Let me remind the House of what took place, and not from hearsay, but on the evidence given by the principal actor. Here enquiry will result in some trivial action. The thing must be put right. What happened? There was a religious festival and thousands of Punjabis had gone into Amritsar. The British officials were anxious, and the Deputy Commissioner on April 9 surrounded the notorious Drs. Satyapal and Kitchlew and carried them off. The news got about and their followers sent a mass deputation to the Deputy Commissioner demanding their release. The deputation was stopped, apparently by troops; it was only armed with sticks and as a result the troops fired and shot some of the demonstrators. Speeches were made over the bodies, and the mob turned and murdered three Englishmen and beat a lady. No one would excuse riots of that sort. On the evening of the 10th General Dyer arrived in Amritsar, and the Deputy

Commissioner handed over the civil power to him. He issued a proclamation by word of mouth that no meetings should be held. Two days later, after there had been no sort of riot, nor murder, General Dyer heard that a meeting was to be held at the Jallianwala Bagh. He proceeded there with about 50 troops, half British, half Indian and a certain number of Gurkhas, armed with their *kukris*. The Jallianwala Bagh is an open space half a mile square, which has one entry wide enough for three persons. The troops got in an lined up on a mound of debris. The walls, seven feet high, and the surrounding houses enclosed the people. There were, too, three alleys through which the people might have been able to pass Within 30 seconds of the troops getting in General Dyer gave orders to fire, and the crowd of people, estimated at anything from 5,000 to 20,000 who were sitting on the ground, peacefully listening to the mob oratory, were fired on. The result of the troops' fire into the mass of people we do not know. But we do know that Dyer's own estimate of the casualities resulting from ten minutes' continual individual firing was 400 to 500 killed and 1,500 wounded. What were the people to do? They could not escape. They were people who had not offered any violence and who had not been warned. These people were shot down. After ten minutes the ammunition was exhausted and the troops marched of, and they left, 1,500 wounded there. There were men lying there for two days, dying of thirst, eating the ground, bleeding to death and nobody to look after them. Those relations who lived near came and carried away some of the wounded from among the heap of dead and dying, but the unfortunate country people died there miserably of their wounds. This is what is done in 1919 in British India. An English sportsman would take any amount of trouble or time to see that a wounded partridge was put out of its misery, but these wounded people were lying there for two days dying slowly. Think what this means. There has never been anything like it before in English history, and not in the whole of our relations with India has there ever been anything of this magnitude before. If you have to go back centuries. In the ordinary English primer the only think the ordinary person learns about British rule in India is about the Black Hole of Calcuta and the massacre of Cawnpore, were there was a well-choked with corpses. Centuries hence you will find Indian children brought up to this spot, just as they visit now the Cawnpore Well, and you can imagine the feelings of these Indians for generations over this terrible business. (An Hon. Member: "What would you have done?") I should not have committed murder. Think what all this means! You will have a shrine erected there and

every year there will be processions of Indians visiting the tombs of the martyrs, and Englishmen will go there and stand bareheaded before it. By this incident you have divided for all time races, races that might otherwise have loved one another. The right hon. gentleman has laid a foundation which might have led to a real co-operation with the British Empire but that has now been destroyed.

'It has not only destroyed that; but it has destroyed our reputation throughout the world. You know what will happen. All the blackguards in Americas when they lynch diggers, will say "Oh, you did the same in India" when butcheries take place in Russia, whether it be by White or Redguards, they will say "We never did anything like what you did in India"; and when we tell the Turks, "You massacred the Armenians," they will say, "Yes we wish we had the chance of getting 5,000 of them together and then of shooting straight." That is the sort of welcome that this will get, and all the decent people in the world will think that England really likes what happened at Amritsar, and that all this sort of thing is English. Really, we know that this sort of thing is the finest Prussianism that ever took place. The German never did anything worse in Belgium. This damns us for all time. Whenever, we put forward the humanitarian view, we shall have this thrown into our teeth. What is it that differentiates this from all other horrors by government in the past? If you have a mob distinctly out to kill and to loot, and the soldiers are called out to meet the mob they have got to stop it. Firing is justified in such cases. There may be hundreds killed in such a case, but, when soldiers are being stoned and hammered it is their duty as well their right, to resist.'[91]

The case was debated in the House of Lords[92] on 19 July 1920 and Viscount Finlay, the first speaker of the day, moved his resolution thus. 'That this House deplores the conduct of the case of General Dyer as unjust to that officer, and as establishing a precedent dangerous to the preservation of law and order in the face of rebellion'.

Lord Birkenhead was critical of the conduct of General Dyer so far as his drastic action in Jallianwala Bagh was concerned. He had no manner of doubt that he had directed his force to the *Bagh* with the clear-cut intention of punishing the assembly of the people of the extent unprecedented in the history. He also stated, 'I claim that anyone who stands here and defends the case of General Dyer should be prepared to defend similar conduct in Glasgow or Belfast or Winnipeg'.

Viscount Milner also had a dig on Dyer's conduct and action. He stated that Dyer had committed a most frightful error of judgement which had the involvement of 'fearful consequences'.

Lord Salisbury pleaded for dropping the case against Dyer and stated that Dyer was right to fire...He did his duty and was successful'.

Lord Sumner, a judge also defended Dyer to the extend as the law of the country could. Questioning the *bona fides* of the inquiry against Dyer, he opined that the latter was entitled to have a definite charged formulated against him he would have been entitled to know who has to be called against him; he would have been entitled to produce witnesses and he would have been entitled to be present at every stage of the hearing...he was heard without any of these protections'.

After discussion, 121 members voted in favour of Finlay's resolution and 86 members against it. As a result of this criticism, Dyer was deprived of his command and put on half-pay.[93]

Mahatma Gandhi remarked well about this tragedy. 'Plassey laid the foundation of the British Empire, Amritsar has shaken it'.

Lenin was also critical of the massacre in the Jallianwala Bagh and in a letter which he happened to write to the editor of the well known nationalist newspaper, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* the Soviet leader conveyed his sympathy for the people who had suffered as result of shooting by Dyer. Unfortunately this letter was intercepted by the Government of India and therefore it was not published.[94]

The massacre did not escape from criticism from no less a leader than M.A. Jinnah. He stated on the first anniversary of this tragedy. 'The death-trap in the Jallianwala Bagh, which I witnessed last December, would move even the stones. That horrible butchery was committed in the name of law and order. I have tried to find out one single word...cowardice, No butchery'.[95]

The *Morning Post* launched a fund for General Dyer and named it as for 'The Man Who Saved India'. 'It was instigated by Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Sir Edward Carson'. The Countess of Bathhurst sent £ 1500, the *Statesman* £ 20,000 and cheques were received from the *Pioneer, and Englishman, the Morning Post,* Calcutta, the *Madras Mail* the *Rangoon Times. Civil and Military Gazettee* and several other newspapers. Besides contributions were sent by the European Association in India, the Madras Club and several civil servants and regimental messes. Thus the total sum raised was £ 2,6,174.10.

The end of Michael O'Dwyer was in a tragic way. Udham Singh son of Sardar Tehl Singh of Sunam in the Punjab who had witnessed the tragic scene in the Jallianwala Bagh had taken a vow to take revenge on O'Dwyer, whenever, he happened to get such an opportunity. And this opportunity came on 12 March 1940, after two decades, when he was living in London under a fictitious name, Ram Mohamed Singh Azad. By that time, O'Dwyer, an old man of 75 years, was leading a retired life with high social contacts. Udham Singh was in search of an opportunity when he could shoot Dwyer from close quarters. He happened to read a poster about a meeting sponsored jointly by the East India Association and the Royal Central Asian Society at the Caxton Hall where O'Dwyer was one of the prominent invitees.

Dressed in an immaculate fashion, Udham Singh could find its way through the Caxton Hall. He had earlier seen O'Dwyer from a distance on a few occasions, so it did not take time to recognise him well amongst the assembly of about 180 persons, Six pistol shots were fired which killed O'Dwyer on the spot and injured a few persons. Udham Singh was arrested and sentenced to death in spite of his seeking legal assistance from most competent advocates like St. John Hutchinson, R.E.Seaton and V.K. Krishna Menon. He was ultimately hanged on 31 July 1940. With his martyrdom, he proved the fact how a youthful spirit like him could act in a way, he acted, to maintain the honour of his motherland by taking a risky revenge on a person during whose administration the ghastly drama had taken place.

The last words of Udham Singh were most significant in their contents. 'He was the real culprit, he wanted to crush my people so I have crushed him. For full 21 years I have been trying to wreak vengeance. I am not scared of death what greater honour could be bestowed to me than death for the sake of my motherland.'

REFERENCES

1. Home Pol. Deposit, June 1919, File 23.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. See Disorders Inquiry Committee, Vol. III, pp. 85, 112.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*

7. Quoted in Report of Indian National Congress, *op cit.*, p. 44.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Arthur Swinson, Six *Minutes to Sunset,* London, 1964, pp. 47-8.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. Home Pol. A., February 1920. File 347-58.
14. Home Pol. A., May 1919, File 74-108.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. A medical practitioner and a Congressman of Amritsar.
18. A leading barrister of Amritsar arrested for participation in the *Satyagraha* Day meeting held on 6 April 1919.
19. Home Pol. Deposit, October 1919, File 62.
20. Arthur Swinson, *op cit.,* p. 63.
21. Home Pol. Deposit, October 1919, File 31.
22. Quoted in the Congress Report, *op cit.*, p. 59.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Area Officers sitting as Summary Courts dealt with cases against 543 persons of whom 386 were convicted.
25. Home Pol, Deposit, July 1919, File 46.
26. Report of Disorders Inquiry Committee, 1919-20, Calcutta, 1920, p. 125.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. Home Pol. Deposit, June 1919, File 26.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Disorders Inquiry Report, p. 82.
32. See the Congress Report, *op cit.*, p. 81.
33. He was an M.A. Bar-at-law; advocate High Court, Punjab; Fellow and a Member of the Syndicate, Pnjab University and the president, Forman Christian College Graduates' Union.
34. At present, *The Tirbune* is published from Chandigarh.
35. The Congress Report, *op cit.,* pp. 82-83.
36. It does not include any flogging resorted to when the mobile columns visited the various villages.

37. Home Pol. Deposit, May 1919, File 4.
38. Rupert Furneauz, *Massacre at Amritsar,* London 1963, p. 20.
39. *Tara Chand, History of the Freedom Movement in India,.* Vol. III, New Delhi, 1972, p. 480.
40. M. K. Gandhi, *op cit.,* p. 522.
41. B. Pattabhi Sataramayya, *The History of The Indian National Congress,* Vol. I, 1885-1935, Bombay, 1946, p. 177.
42. Home Pol. Deposit, August 1919, File 16.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Ian Colvin, *The Life of General Dyer,* London, 1931, pp. 201-02.
45. Disorders Inquiry Committee, Vol. III, p. 203.
46. V.N. Datta, *op. cit.,* p. 156
47. Quoted in Edward Thompson, *A Letter from India,* London, 1932, p. 102.
48. Rupert Furneauz, *op cit.,* p. 177.
49. Dyer was fifty-five years old in 1919.
50. Disorders Inquiry Committee, Vol. VI, p. 68.
51. *Ibid.,* Vol. III, p. 36.
52. Valentine Chirol, II, pp. 177-78.
53. Pearay Mohan, *An Imaginary Rebellion,* Lahore, pp. 17 ff.
54. See M. R. Jayakar Papers, No. 477.
55. Home Department, Political Deposit, August 1920, No. 38.
56. Now it is called Mohan Meakin brewery.
57. *Young India*, 23 July 1919.
58. Home Pol. Deposit, August 1919, File 52.
59. See the Resolutions of A.I.C.C. in *The Indian Review,* May 1919.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. See the Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Special Session, Bombay, 1918.
63. Home Pol. A., July 1919, File 56-59.
64. *The Bombay Chronicle,* 25, June 1919.
65. *ıbid.*
66. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, op. cit.,* p. 387.
67. Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India, p. 801.

68. The Governor-General-in-Council reduced on 6 July Kalinath Roy's term of imprisonment from two years to three months.
69. Debates, Legislative Assembly, September 1919.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
77. The Durga Koti Lane.
78. Frances Sherwood was a missionary doctor and superintendent of the mission school in Amritsar. On 10 April she was attacked by a mob which had failed to recognise her and suffered severe injuries. To avenge it, Dyer ordered that Indians should crawl on their stomachs along that street.
79. S. Gopal, (ed.,) *op cit.*,p. 130.
80. Street.
81. S. Gopal, *op cit.*, p. 130.
82. Jawharlal Nehru, *op cit.*, pp. 43-44.
83. Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer were present in the House of Commons to hear this debate. See Debates, House of Commons 1910, Vol. XXXI, pp. 1720 ff.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.*
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*
90. Debates, House of Lords, 1920, Vol. XXI, p. 293 ff.
91. *Ibid.*
92. See V.N. Data, *op cit.*, pp. 172-73.
93. *Bombay Chronicle*, 14 april 1920.
94. Alfred Drafer, *op cit.*, pp. 236-38.
95. Among other aliases he had used in the past were Sher Singh Udai Singh and Frank Brazil.

4

The Hunter Committee

On 14th October 1919, the Governor-General-in-Council, with the approval of the Secretary of State for India, decided to appoint a committee to investigate the disturbances in Punjab, Delhi and Bombay and pin point their causes and the measures taken to cope with them. The president of the Disorders Inquiry Committee was Lord William Hunter, ex-Solicitor-General and the Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland; and the other members were G.C. Rankin, Judge of the High Court, Calcutta; W.F. Rice, Additional Secretary to the government of India, Home Department; Major General George Barrow, Commanding the Peshawar Division; Pandit Jagat Narayan. Thomas Smith, both members of the Legislative Council United Provinces; Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad, Advocate, High Court, Bombay; and Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan, Muntazim-ud-Doula, Member for Appeals, Gwalior State. The secretary of the committee was H.G. Stokes,[1] secretary to the government of Madras. The committee which was to conduct its inquires in public as well as in camera, was required to submit its report to the Government of India.[2]

In their final findings, the members of the committee were not unanimous in their opinion; obviously the report, although published in one volume, had two phases—the first dealing with the majority report agreed upon by William Hunter, G.C. Rankin, W.F. Rice, George Barrow and Thomas Smith, and the second dealing with the minority report signed by Jagat Narayan. C.H. Setalvad and Sultan Ahmed.[3]

The majority report dealt with the occurrences in Delhi, Bombay Presidency, Punjab, declaration of martial law and the kind of administration in these provinces. The first outbreak occurred in Delhi on 30 March, 1919 when a general *hartal* was declared as part of Gandhi's call for *satyagraha* against the Rowlatt legislation. It took

place with success in the sense that shops both of Hindus and Muslims were closed and business was brought to a standstill in the city. The people of the city observed the day as one of fasting and abstinence from work. A considerable number of them went to Delhi Railway Station, where they endeavoured to get the vendors of refreshments at the third class refreshment room to abstain from work and join with them in their *hartal*. On refusal of vendors, they dragged the contractor who was hurt in the scuffle. On this when the railway police arrested two persons, the mob got infuriated and began to demonstrate, obstructing and finally stopping traffic at the Railway Station. The civil authorities requisitioned the services of the army and this force proved effective and the crowd of people was pressed back across Queen's Road by the soldiers. Bricks were thrown at policemen and the soldiers and the situation became serious when the crowd was completely out of control. At this, the mob was fired at as a result of which two or three persons were killed and several wounded.[4] After the firing, the crowd moved towards the Town Hall and Chandni Chowk. The police was pelted with missiles by the crowd which refused to disperse although requested to do so by some of the police constables in front. At this firing was again resorted to and as a result thereof eight persons were killed and about a dozens were wounded.[5]

On 1st April, shops were opened in the city and a meeting was held at the Fatehpuri mosque where Hindus also participated in large number. On 9th April, Gandhi who was on his way from Bombay to Delhi, was stopped at a small station Palwal, in the Punjab. He was taken under police custody, and this news spread throughout the city like wild fire. Next day there was a general *hartal* in the city as the word came in the evening of that day of the serious occurrences at Amritsar and Lahore. Although there was a collection of a crowd of people at some places, where was no unpleasant incident in the city. The *hartal,* however, continued in spite of the effort of the officials who had arranged numerous meetings with the local leaders. No disturbance occurred in Delhi after 17th April. On 18th april most of the shops in the suburbs of the city and a certain number in the main bazar opened, while on the 19th shops in the Chandni Chowk opened and the *hartal* was brought to an end.[6] The committee observed thus: 'The outbreak in Delhi on 30th March arose out of the *hartal* held in connection with Mr. Gandhi's passive resistance movement started as a protest against the Rowlatt legislation...Mr. Gandhi resolved to have a *hartal* held

throughout India on a particular day as an indication of national disapproval of the Government's policy and there was considerable agitation connected therewith. There is no doubt that the feeling against the Rowlatt Act was very widespread. Bitter speeches were made against it when it was before the Legislative Council. Wild rumours were circulated as to its effect. As examples of these rumours we were told that it was said that, under the Act, the police would have power to arrest any three or four men conversing together, that nobody would be allowed to own more than a certain amount of land, and that nobody would be allowed to marry without leave from Government. These and similar rumours were widely circulated and believed by the illiterate population who were not familiar with the provisions of the Act. So far as Delhi is concerned, it is not said that the political leaders were responsible for the circulation of these rumours. The worst thing alleged against them is, that they did not deny the truth of the rumours and did not trouble themselves to explain the nature and effect of the provisions of the Act which they were denouncing.'

As regards the measures taken by the authorities to deal with the disturbances, the committee stated that these were adequate and reasonable. Martial law was never proclaimed though the situation was so serious that the Chief Commissioner applied to the Government of India for authority to declare martial law. Throughout the critical period he received assistance from the military in quelling disturbances, patrolling of the streets and maintenance of law and order. On all the occasions firing was ordered after the patience of those entrusted with the duty of maintaining public peace and order had been sorely tried and all reasonable efforts had been made to induce the crowd to disperse peacefully. In no case was firing continued longer than was necessary to achieve the 'legitimate object of restoring order and preventing a disastrous outbreak of violence.[7]

The committee gave its findings about the occurrence of disturbances in Ahmedabad, Viramgam, Nadiad, Kaira and Bombay. Ahmedabad with a population of four lakh, seventy-eight mills and forty thousand workmen was the centre of numerous political meetings at which the doctrine of Home Rule was advocated by prominent leaders. Many branches of the Home Rule League were established in Ahmedabad and the neighbouring district. A special feature of the situation was the particular interest taken by the people in Mahatma Gandhi and his *satyagraha* movement.

On 23rd February 1919, a meeting of the Ahmedabad branch of the Home Rule League was held to protest against the Rowlatt Bills. From this meeting, the origin of *satyagraha* movement could be traced. On the following day another meeting was held in Gandhi's *ashram*. It was attended by representative Home Rulers from Bombay who decided to start a passive resistance campaign against the proposed Rowlatt legislation. A manifesto was drawn up and approved containing a form of oath to be taken by the members of the *satyagraha sabha* to refuse to obey the Rowlatt Bills, if passed and such other laws as a committee, to be appointed later, were to decide.

The agitation against the Rowlatt legislation was vigorously maintained all through the month of March, particularly in Ahmedabad and Kaira districts. Feelings of irritation and anger against the government were roused among the masses. The news of Gandhi's arrest spread rapidly and caused great excitement. The mill-hands ceased work, and the shops in the city were closed. The secretary of the *Satyagraha Sabha* issued a circular for the Congress workers in which he declared about Gandhi's arrest. At this, they felt much excited. The streets were filled with disorderly crowds who enforced *hartal* and compelled persons in conveyances to get down and walk a a sign of mourning.[8]

The 11th April was marked by disturbances of great violence, requiring an extensive use of military force. The mob burnt the *Mamlatdar's*[9] court-house, the telegraph office, the post office at Delhi gate and two police *chowkies*. Another mob went to the electric power station, assaulted a British official there and stopped the working of the power station. Thus, the riotous crowds were everywhere in the city, breaking street-lamps and doing other damage. Some police constables were caught and stripped of their uniforms and drive away. Even in the presence of troops the mobs showed little restraint and on several occasions the parties of troops, sent to assist the civil authority in the maintenance of order, had to resort to firing. The total number of casualties caused by the firing was about six or seven. 'When night fell, the city and suburbs except on the north-west were still in the hands of the rioters who during the night burnt some minor government and municipal buildings in the mill area and suburbs, had taken refuge in the Shahibagh or at the Railway Station, where they were under military protection'.

The military force remained on vigil in many areas of the city. The electric power station being closed, the city and Railway Station

were without light. The drainage pumping-engine had ceased to work and the municipal conservancy staff had virtually disappeared. The committee reported that 'The need of effective action speedily to restore order was imperative'. The government ordered that 'Any gathering of over ten individuals collected in one spot will be fired at. Any single individual seen outside any house who does stop and come up when challenged between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. will be shot.'

Meanwhile Gandhi and Miss Anasuya Sarabhai arrived at Ahmedabad on 13th April. The former at once visited the Commissioner and arrangements were made that the proclamation issued by the military authorities should be withdrawn on the 14th April. On that day, Gandhi addressed a huge meeting of people in which he upbraided them for their violence and exhorted them to resume their lawful occupations. The committee noted in its report, 'His address had a very beneficial effect and the disturbances at Ahmedabad practically came to an end on the 14th April.'[10]

The committee recorded that during the disturbances there were two fatal casualties on the side of law and order, namely, the armed constable who was thrown from the balcony and Sergeant Fraser. Among the rioters 28 were known to have been killed and 123 wounded....it is probable that there were more, but the other have not been traced.' The number of round fired during the whole period was 139 by the police and 639 by the troops. Telegraph wires were cut at eight places in Ahmedabad and at fourteen places outside. The value of the property destroyed by the rioters at Ahmedabad was approximately nine and a half lakh of rupees. The committee opined, 'We are of opinion that the measures taken by the authorities to deal with the disturbances were appropriate. The use of military force was unavoidable and the rioters alone were responsible for the casualties which ensured. the control of the city was in the hands of the military for less than two days and this has been referred to as a period of martial law. But beyond maintaining order and issuing the proclamation on 12th April, the military authorities did not interfere with matters of administration. The so-called martial law orders were drastic; but the situation was most serious. The belief that all groups of more than ten men would be fired on without warning did much to restore order, and it appears that this instruction was not in fact literally carried out.'

Besides, there were disturbances at Viramgam where the people took their cue from Ahmedabad. On 11th April there was a general

hartal in the town. Mill-hands struck work and all shops were closed. The next day, the mob broke out in violent disorder, murdered an Indian magistrate, set on fire the Railway Station, cut telegraph wires, put the police *chowki* on fire, and plundered and burned the local post office. The police resorted to firing which caused a complete dispersion of the rioters. A detachment of troops arrived from Ahmedabad and took charge of the town. This marked the end of the disturbances and no further outbreak occurred. The shops of Viramgam reopened on the 13th April. According to the report of the committee, six persons were killed and eighteen wounded. The value of the property destroyed by the rioters exceeded two lakh of rupees. 'The unarmed police in the town were helpless and disappeard. The force used against the rioters...was certainly not excessive. If greater force could have been applied at an early stage, the commission of an atrocious murder[11] and much destruction of property might have been prevented...Apart from the murder, fifty men were tried for offences connected with the occurrences, of whom twenty-seven were convicted and the rest acquitted'.

In Kaira, people observed *hartal* throughout the district and at Nadiad, the mill-hand strucks work and all shops were closed. On the night of the 11th April, a party from Nadiad removed a rail from the permanent way at a place about one and half-a mile south of the Nadiad, travelling at high speed. The train was derailed at the gap, but was brought to a stand without loss of life. The actual result was that the arrival of the troops at Ahmedabad was delayed for some hours. The next day, railway line was again damaged within a few miles of Nadiad; the telegraph wires were cut; rail-keys removed, telegraph posts pulled down, insulators smashed and the sleepers of a culvert set on fire. Besides at two other places in the neighbourhood, Vadod and Anand, telegraph wires were cut on the night of the 11th April. In view of these outrages and to allay the excitement, detachments of troops were posted for sometime at Nadiad and other places in the district, but were not actively employed.

In Kaira district, 82 persons were sent up for trial of whom 17 were convicted. There were two sentences of transportation for life, the remaining sentences being rigorous imprisonment for periods varying from ten years to one-and-a half months. 'According to the statement of the District Magistrate, Ahmedabad, a local levy was made in order to give compensation to those who had suffered from the destruction of property during the disorder. It was recovered in three different ways by levy from income-tax payees, by levy from the payees

of the general municipal water-rate in Ahmedabad and also by confiscation of the caution -money of the mill-hands. The mill-hands always deposited one week's caution-money with the employers....This methods of raising money was criticised as inequitable; and putting an unfair burden on certain people. It does not appear to us that this was a measure taken to cope with the disturbances.'

The first outbreak in the Punjab occurred at Amritsar on the 10th April 1919. It had a population of 1,50,000 and the most active and influential leaders—certainly in the period just before the disturbances were Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal. 'Their speeches,' the committee reported, 'some of which we have examined and some of which afterwards came in question at their trial before a Tribunal established under martial law—show that on such points as the Rowlatt Bill, the expected Turkish Peace terms, and indeed on many if not all disputed matters, their attitude was one of very vigorous complaint against government. In particular both of these gentlemen had joined Mr. Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement and had taken the *Satyagraha* vow to disobey the Rowlatt Act and any other laws which a committee should select.'

On 23rd March a meeting was held in Amritsar in support of Gandhi's movement, and at another meeting on 29 March a *hartal* was decided on for the following day. On the same day, Dr. Satyapal was served with an order by the Punjab government under the Defence of India Act, prohibiting him from speaking in public. The *hartals* on the 30th March and 6th April were successful and stopped the whole business of the city. Dr. Kitchlew was served with an order similar to that made against Dr. Satyapal.

'The Deputy Commissioner, Miles Irving, was much perturbed by the proof afforded by the second *hartal* and of the power and influence of Dr. Kitchlew and Satyapal. The Deputy Commissioner stated 'Who are at the bottom of this I cannot say...Kitchlew himself I regard as the local agent of very much bigger men... I think that things will be worse before they are better and that for the present we must rely on ourselves alone.'

The orders of the local government for the deportation of Dr. Kitchlew and Satyapal reached the Deputy Commissioner on the evening of the 9th April. They were to be removed quietly to Dharamsala. The Deputy Commissioner decided to send for the two leaders to his house on 10th April at 10 a.m. They were accompanied

by some friends. In about half an hour, they had left for Dharamsala by motor car as arranged.

Soon after the news of the deportation was spreading in the city; shops were being closed and crowds were collecting. A huge crowd of people was much excited and angry and was making for civil lines, in order to see the Deputy Commissioner. The crowd was stopped by the mounted picket at the end of the Hall Bridge. The crowd pushed back the picket making the horses restive and uncontrollable by hitting them with sticks. The crowd resorted to stoning the men of the picket. Meanwhile crowds from Hathi Gate and Lohgarh Gate joined them. Now the number rose to about 30,000 persons. The committee reported, 'the non-commissioned officer in charge was given the necessary order, the crowd was fired upon and between twenty and thirty consulties ensued...At this stage, and of this crowd, we consider it certain that the temper and determination to violence was more obvious, more resolute and more obvious than that which had been exhibited earlier in the day. We think that the order to fire was rightly given and we can find no ground for saying that the necessity of the movement was in any way exceeded or abused.'

The committee recorded the murders, arson and loot by the crowd in Amritsar. At the National Bank, the Manager, Mr. Stewart and his assistant, Mr. Scott, were brutally beaten to death by the mob. Their bodies were burnt in a pile of bank furniture. The building was sacked, set on fire and completely gutted. The godowns at the rear in which large quantities of piece-goods were kept were broken into and thrown open for looting.[12] The Alliance Bank was also attacked and its Manager, G.M. Thomson who attempted to defend himself with a revolver was brutally murdered and flung from the balcony on to the street: his body was burnt in the street: in a tragic manner under a huge pile of bank furniture drenched in kerosene oil. Similarly, at the Charted bank, glass and other property had been smashed and an attempt made to set it on fire. The mob was however, dispersed by the police.

The committee reported, 'No steps whatever were taken to see what could be seen from the *Kotwali* of its immediate precincts, to get information about Hall Bazaar from the gateway, to keep an eye on the crowds at the back of the Town Hall, to keep a look-out in the direction of the Alliance Bank or any of the other banks which had been picketed on the *hartal* of the 6th. The Deputy Superintendent did not even receive a single report from the detectives who were his only scouts. His conduct

at the Chartered Bank was pointless and ineffective beyond excuse...It is not clear upon his evidence that up to 1-30 he had done anything: it is clear that from that time until 5 O'clock he took no steps to make an enquiry or to do anything as regards the city or as regards his main reserve. He knew enough and more than enough to call for energetic action: the duty upon which he employed all his time and 25 of his armed men was idle and unnecessary after the first ten minutes: since the Europeans could have been brought at once to the *Kotwali* and a small picket left at the bank within easy hail of those headquarters.'[13]

Besides, there were other cases of arson, looting, damage to property and ghastly murders in Amritsar City. The whole telephone system was put out of action when the telephone instruments were smashed to pieces and the telephone exchange with its switchboard and fittings destroyed. The goods yard was stormed, damaged and looted and Guard Robinson of the North-Western Railway was chased and brutally beaten to death. Mr. Bennett, the station superintendent was caught and injured severely but the station picket saved his life. Besides Sergeant Rowlands, an electrician in the military workers department, was attacked near the Rego Bridge and murdered.[14]

The mob also chased a lady missionary, Miss Sherwood, while she was bicycling in a narrow street in the city on her way to one of her schools. She was intercepted and overtaken while on the ground: when she got up to run she was knocked down again more than once: a door which she tried to enter was slammed in her face: in the end she was left on the street because she was thought to be dead.[15] Besides the Indian Christian Church and the Religious Book Society's Depot and Hall were burnt. The sub-post offices at the Golden Temple, Majith Mandi and Dhal Basti Ram were looted. At Bhagtanwala Railway Station which is on the Taran Taran line, the station was looted and burnt; the goods-shed and a wagon were looted: the point-locks and the telegraph wires were broken. At the night the Chheharta Railway Station was attacked by villagers who looted a goods train that was standing in the yard.

The committee clarified in its report, 'This narrative of mob violence while doubtless not exhaustive is sufficient to show the nature and character of the outbreak in all important respects. That it was anti-government is clear at ever stage: starting in anger at the action of government in deporting the two local politicians[16] it proceeded by attack upon post offices and the railway....The attack upon the asks was

primarily motivated by the race-hatred which led and directed the desire for destruction and loot. The records of the trials certainly go to show that the actual perpetrators of brutal murder were not representative Amritsar citizens but of what may be called the "hooligan" class, some of whom in Amritsar appear to have had a certain leadership or influence over those of their own kind...We do not omit to notice and to signalise the fact that some Indian citizens were doing their best to reason with crowds which had to be repulsed at Hall Bridge, that Miss Sherwood was ultimately taken care of by some Indians....Other efforts by sane and loyal citizens inside the city on that day we have no doubt there were.'[17]

The Commissioner of the Division, A.J.W. Kitchin and the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, D. Donald, arrived at the Railway Station from Lahore by motor car on the evening of the 10th April. The total number of persons killed on the 10th by the fire of the troops was approximately ten; the number wounding must be greater.

On the evening of the 11th April, Brigadier-General R.E. H. Dyer who commanded a Brigade at Jullundur Cantonment, arrived at Amritsar and took over charge from Major Macdonald. He transferred the headquarters from the Railway Station to the Ram Bagh, a central place in the city. On 12th April a strong column under General Dyer marched round the city as crowds were reported to be collected outside it. These were made to go back peaceably and the troops went into the city to the *Kotwali*. General Dyer deposed before the committee that the bearing of the local inhabitants was most insolent and may of them spat on the ground as the troops passed.[18]

On 13 April, General Dyer went through the city with the District Magistrate and some other officials and had a proclamation read by the *naib-tahsildar* to the people. From an examination of the map where the proclamation was read, it is evident that in many parts of the city the proclamation was not read. The committee reported that many people on hearing the proclamation[18] read did not treat it seriously, but that remarks were made that it was bluff, that General Dyer would not fire and not to be afraid. At the time when 'General Dyer's proclamation was being read out, a counter-proclamation was made to the effect that the meeting was to be held in the afternoon in the Jallianwala Bagh. A meeting had been held a day earlier in the compound of the Hindu Sabha School at which an announcement had been made for a meeting to be held at the Jallianwala Bagh on the 13th April'.[19]

About one O'clock, General Dyer received the information that the people intended to hold a huge meeting at 4:30 p.m. On being asked why he did not take measures to prevent its being held, he replied, 'I went there as soon as I could. I had to think the matter out, I had to organise my forces and make up my mind as to where I might put my pickets. I thought I had done enough to make the crowd not meet. If they were going to meet, I had to consider the military situation and make up mind what to do, which took me a certain amount of time.'

About 4 O'clock in the afternoon of 13th April, the General received definite information that a meeting was being held at Jallianwala Bagh contrary to the terms of the proclamation issued by him earlier. He then proceeded through the city with a number of pickets which he left at pre-arranged places, and a special force of 25 Gorkhas and 25 Baluchis armed with rifles; 40 Gorkhas armed only with *Kukris* and two armoured cars. On arriving at Jallianwala Bagh, he entered with this force by a narrow entrance which was not sufficiently wide to allow the cars to pass. They were left in the street outside. 'According to the report sent by General Dyer to the Adjutant-General after the occurrence the crowd numbered about 6,000. It is probable that it was such more numerous and that from 10 to 20 thousand people were assembled.'

The committee stated, 'Without giving the crowd any warning to disperse, which he considered unnecessary as they were in breach of his proclamation, he orders this troops to fire and the firing was continued for about 10 minutes. There is no evidence as to the nature of the address to which the audience was listening. None of them was provided with fire-arms although some of them may have been carrying sticks.' As a result of this firing approximately 379 persons were killed. No figure was given for the wounded but their number may be taken as probably three times as great as the number of killed.

The committee criticised the action of General Dyer thus: 'General Dyer's action in firing on the crowd at Jallianwala Bagh is open to criticism in two respects. (First) that he started firing without giving the people who had assembled a chance to disperse and (second) that he continued firing for a substantial period of time after the crowd had commenced to disperse.'

'In the ordinary case where a proclamation has been issued forbidding assemblies of people and intimating that a gathering held

in defiance of the proclamation may have to be dispersed by military force, notice is properly given to the crowd before they are a actually fired upon. The military situation at the time. *e.g.,* the risk of a small force of soldiers being overwhelmed by a threatening mob may justify firing without the formality of giving a notice to disperse, being observed. The only person who can judge whether or not such an emergency has arisen is the officer-in-command of the troops. In his report to the General staff dated 25th August 1919, General Dyer does not suggest the existence of such an emergency from anything observed by him in the demeanour of the crowd prior to his giving the order to fire. When examined before us he explained that his mind was made up as he came along in his motor car—if his orders against holding a meeting were disobeyed he was going to fire at once. Apparently, he looked upon the warning which he had given in the morning as sufficient notice and justification for his firing upon a crowd assembling in defiance thereof.

'The majority at all events of the people who assembled had done so in direct defiance of a proclamation issued in the interests of peace and order—many thinking that the reference to firing was mere bluff. In spite of this circumstances notice to disperse would have offered those assembled in ignorance of the proclamation and other people also an opportunity to leave the Bagh and should have been given. If the notice had been disregarded, General Dyer would have been justified in firing on the crowd, to compel it to disperse.

'In continuing to fire as he did it appears to us that General Dyer committed a grave error....In continuing firing as long as he did, it is evident that General Dyer had in view not merely the dispersal of the crowd that had assembled contrary to this orders, but the desire to produce a moral effect in the Punjab....In our view this was unfortunately a mistaken conception of his duty. If necessary a crowd that has assembled contrary to a proclamation issued to prevent or terminate disorder may have to be fired upon; but continued firing upon that crowd cannot be justified because of the effect such firing may have upon people in other places. The employment of excessive measures is as likely as not to produce the opposite result to that desired.

'The action taken by General Dyer has also been described by others as having saved the situation in the Punjab and having averted a rebellion on a scale similar to the Mutiny. It does not, however, appear to us possible to draw this conclusion, particularly in view of the fact

that it is not proved that a conspiracy to overthrow British power had been formed prior to outbreaks.'

The committee viewed the situation in Amritsar thus, 'It is quite true that in the course if the 12th the position was hardening into *de facto* martial law. The Commissioner had left on the night of the 11th and General Dyer had arrived somewhat later on that night. On the 13th formal martial law was expected; the trouble had been spreading and Amritsar was known not to be the only area involved. The proclamation of the 13th imposed permits for travel and a curfew at 8 p.m.; it prohibited gatherings or processions. These were not unreasonable orders in themselves; they were issued with the cognisance of the Deputy Commissioner; had they been wisely enforced little would have been heard of any special grievance over this single day.'[20]

The disturbances in the district of Lahore occurred first in the town of Lahore and then in the Kasur sub-division. The committee recorded that trouble in the capital and been brewing for sometime before it eventuated in serious disorder on the evening of the 10th April. The disorders in Kasur occurred on the 12th, no marked premonitory signs having preceded it in that locality.

In Lahore, an active opposition to the Rowlatt Bills had started very early after their publication in the *Gazettee of India* on the 18th January 1919. The protest meetings were held on 4th February and 9th March at the Bradlaugh Hall under the leadership of Lala Duni Chand, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Rambhaj Dutt. On 18th March, Rowlatt Bill No. 2 was passed and this was followed on 24th March by Gandhi's call for a *hartal,* a twenty-four hours' fast, cessation from work and the holding of public meetings. The *hartal* of the 6th April was complete. Processions were taken out.[21] The committee stated in its report, 'Thus although no collision between the people and the police took place, there were, from the point of view of the authorities very disquieting elements in the day's occurrences and the police had a strenuous time. For the most part shopkeepers closed their shops voluntarily but their were certain cases where coercion was employed against people who wished to keep their shops open and against people riding in cars. The crowds marching through the streets indulged in cries such as *Hai Hai George Mar Gya* (King George is dead). They demonstrated against Indians who were believed to be friendly to the government. At the meeting in the Bradlaugh Hall, European police officers who attended were loudly hooted and hissed....It may be noted that resolutions were passed

condemning the authorities at Delhi for having fired upon innocent persons without any justification and viewing with alarm and disapproval the orders passed by the Punjab government against Dr. Kitchlew, Satyapal and others.'[22]

On 10 April the political atmosphere, already highly charged, was made acutely worse with the arrival of the news that Gandhi had been prohibited from entering the Punjab and Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal had been deported. Crowds had begun to assemble in the city, shops were closed and shouts of *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai* were heard. Students made themselves prominent with their participation with the demonstrators. When the crowd reached the Mall, it became out of control.

On 11th April the shops in the city were closed and a huge crowd of Hindus and Muslims—numbering about 25,000—collected in the Badshahi Mosque. This crowd was addressed by Rambhaj Dutt and others. Inside the gate of the mosque, a banner was hung bearing the inscription, 'the king who practise tyranny cuts his own roots underneath.' Inflammatory speeches were delivered in the course of which allegations were made that the police had fired on the crowd the preceding day after they had retreated and that this action was a tyrannical action.

The committee observed thus, 'At the conclusion of the meeting, the mob headed by hooligans carrying sticks marched through the city shouting. On the way, they destroyed pictures of the King Emperor and the Queen Empress shouting that "King George is dead." The band of hooligans referred to was known as the *Danda Fauj*.[23] They went about the city in a band on the 11th and 12th, their leader delivering seditious lectures in the bazaar saying that King George was not their king, that the Amir of Afghanistan and the Emperor of Germany were their kings. They carried sticks after the manner of troops with rifles and recruited supporters from the mobs. Apart from these crude manifestations of sedition which took place after the meeting, the meeting itself was a very extraordinary one to be held in a mosque.'[24]

By this time, the authorities resolved to regain control over the city with a mixed column of 800 police and military personnel under Colonel Frank Johnson who entered the city by the Delhi Gate. This force was supported by two aeroplanes in case the troops on the march should be bombed or fired upon from the houses. The crowds appeared

and strong forces of Indian troops and police were posted in the city. When the column got to the Hira Mandi, there was a large crowd moving to and from the Badshahi Mosque. Some of them were armed with *lathis.* This crowd took no notice of any warnings to disperse and eventually a Muhammadan magistrate was sent to clear the mosque. This he did and crowds came out of it. Cavalry tried to disperse them, but they refused to go and attempted to stampede the horses. Eventually, a dense mass collected at the Hira Mandi where there was a considerable open space. Stone-throwing began and the police had to fire. One man was killed and 28 were wounded. 'We think that it was essential on this day to disperse this crowd and that it would have been the end of all chance to restore order in Lahore if the police and troops had left without dispersing it.'

Several posters of a seditious and inflammatory character which had been exhibited in different parts of the city were secured by the police. Some of these were issued on earlier dates than the 10th. For example, on 6th April a poster was removed from the Bradlaugh Hall in which it was said, 'to practise tyranny and to give it the name of love, what a fine trick is this of the civilisation of the West.' Of the posters appearing on the 12th the committee referred to one containing such passages as these. 'We are the Indian nation whose bravery and honour have been acknowledged by all the kings of the world. The English are the worst lot and are like monkeys whose deceit and cunning are obvious to all, high and low. Have these monkeys forgotten their original conditions. Now these faithless people have forgotten the loyalty of Indians, are bent upon exercising limitless tyranny. O brethren, gird up you loins and fight. Kill and be killed. Do not lose courage and try your utmost to turn those mean monkeys from your holy country.'[25]

Soon after, precensorship was imposed upon all local newspapers. On 13 April, the district of Lahore was proclaimed under the Seditious Meeting Act and notice was given forbidding all assemblies of more than ten persons. Beside liquor shops were ordered to close.

At Kasur, the *hartal* was observed on 12 April 1919 and a huge crowd under the leadership of Nadir Ali Shah took its way to the Railway Station carrying a *charpoy* with a black flag on it by way of symbolising the 'funeral of liberty'. It did considerable damage by breaking doors and throwing stones at windows. The instruments at the telegraph office were put out of action, furniture was set on fire, the booking office ransacked, an oil-shed was burnt, the telegraph wires

were cut and all the goods inside the station buildings were looted or destroyed.

The committee also referred to the incident of the attack of the mob on Captain Limby and Lieutenant Munro who were greeted with shouts of 'kill them, kill them', with difficulty they managed to fight their way along the side of the train and sought refuge in village. 'It is hardly doubtful that if they had been overpowered their lives would have been taken.' At one state, when the mob was out of control, police resorted to fire. As a result of it, four men died and a few were wounded. The committee stated, 'We uphold the decision to fire upon the mob and think that it should have been fired upon before the Deputy Superintendent of Police arrived.' On 12th April troops arrived from Ferozepur and further trouble was thus averted. On 16th April martial law was imposed at Kasur.

On 12 April the railway state at Khem Karan[26] was attacked by a 'gang' of about twenty-five persons. Some damage was done to the telegraph apparatus and some articles were looted, but the rioters were drive off by the police.

A very serious outbreak occurred at Gujranwala.[27] On 5th April 1919, a meeting was held at which resolutions were passed disapproving of the Rowlatt Bills. On 14th April, crowds had been astir; forcing shopkeepers to close their shops; shouting against the Rowlatt Bills and uttering 'jais' for Hindu—Muslim unity and for various well-known leaders. A huge crowd assembled at the Railway Station when a train from Lahore had arrived. They tried to prevent passengers from going to Wazirabad for the *Baisakhi* fair there. The driver and the guard were interfered with and the train was stoned. It moved out of the station with an excited crowd following it. Besides the Katchi bridge had been set on fire by pilling wood soaked in petroleum upon the sleepers. The telegraph wires had been cut on both sides of Gujranwala. Meetings were addressed about the Rowlatt Act. The city post office was burnt and water-pumps were damaged. The crowds were waving black flags and hurling bricks. The *tahsil*, the church, the *dak* banglow and the district courts were all set on fire. The police liens themselves were attacked. The mob returned to the Railway Station, set the buildings and the goods-shed on fire and looted the property.[28]

When the police were nearly exhausted, three aeroplanes from Lahore arrived over the town. Major Carberry first took action outside the town of Gujranwala. He dropped, as he reported to the committee,

three bombs on a party of about 150 persons who were making for Gujranwala. This was outside a village two miles away from the town. A woman and a boy were killed and two men slightly wounded. Meanwhile, Major Carberry observed a party of about 200 persons in a field near the Khalsa High School and Boarding House. He dropped a bomb which burst in a courtyard and several persons were wounded. Thirty rounds were fired at the party with the machine-gun. 'We were informed that so far as is known the casualties on this occasion were one man hit by a splinter and one small by stunned'. Of the other two aeroplanes sent to Gujranwala from Lahore, one took no action; the other fired 25 rounds from its machine-gun upon a gathering of 20 to 30 persons on a level crossing between the civil lines and the city, but dropped no bombs.

The committee reported, 'Colonel O'Brien, the Deputy Commissioner of Gujranwala informed us that so far as could be ascertained the total casualties in Gujranwala on 14th April including those killed by bombs and machine-guns and those shot by the police were 11 killed and 27 wounded.'[29]

The committee gave its final verdict thus: 'It appears to us that in the circumstances the decision to use bomb-carrying aeroplanes at Gujranwala on the 14th April was justified...The rioters had cut off communication by telegraph or telephone between Gujranwala and outside places; they had been trying their best to make the railway useless for a sending troops to the town; their violence could only be measured when it had been stopped; it was not stopped till the aeroplanes appeared; the police had definitely failed to impose control and were practically exhausted...We are not prepared to lay down as a charter for rioters that when they succeed in preventing the ordinary resources of government from being utilised to suppress them they are to be exempt from having to reckon with such resources as remain...As regards the bombs which fall in Gujranwala, we confine ourselves to the two bombs which burst. This action we uphold. These bombs appear to have fallen in the midst of rioters caught in the act of rioting and fully minded to continue...These bombs were not only justified, but in our view, were invaluable, and the fact that the disorders were ended by the aeroplanes long before troops arrived, is, we think in large measure attributable to them... Major Carberry's action in firing with his machine-gun upon crowds in the streets of Gujranwala does not appear to us excessive. He explained to us that there was a large crowd

and these rounds were fired at people who were collecting round the station and who were running away when they saw him begin to fire. It is no doubt difficult to judge from a flying machine moving rapidly in the air, the moment at which effective and definite dispersal of a large crowd has been ensured.

'The instructions which should be given to officers in charge of aeroplanes when employed in the suppression of disorders might appropriately from the subject of a careful inquiry by those in command of the Air Force. Special problems are presented in the use both of bombs and of machine-guns from the air and there may be other means with which an aeroplanes might be proved for dispersing crowds.'[30]

The disorder spread extensively in the Gujranwala district. These places were Wazirabad, Akalgarh and Hafizabad. Renewed acts of disorder occurred on 15th April. Persistent attacks were made upon the railway. The rails about one-and-half miles from Dhaban Singh Station were torn up and telegraph wires cut. The station itself was attacked and looted. The arrival of the armoured train marked the end of disorder.

In Gujrat city, Jalalpur Jattan and Mulakwal crowds of people had black-flag demonstrations. *Hartal* was observed, railway furniture was damaged and telegraph wires were cut. The police controlled the situation and there was no causality.

In Lyallpur, the local Congress committee gave a call for *hartal* which was successfully observed without any incident. The committee reported, 'During this period a very disquieting and prominent feature in Lyallpur was the continued exhibition of posters of an inflammatory and criminal character...On the 13th and 14th, nothing occurred save excited and noisy gatherings of people, but the tension was such that on the evening of the 14th all the Europeans the number was about 907 were concentrated in two bungalows in the Civil lines so that they might more easily be defended...In the night of the 17th, four out of eight stacks of government *bhusa*[31] at the station were burnt. No one was ever sent up for trial or convicted for this though the damage done amounted to about Rs. 50,000 and it seems just possible that it caught fire accidentally. More troops arrived on the 17th and on the 19th, a moveable column came to Lyallpur, its presence safeguarding the town against further disorder.'

The committee gave its findings about the attacks on means of communication operated by the government. The interruptions of the

telegraph and railways were persistent and widespread. This was one of the earliest manifestations of violence in Amritsar on 10 April and 'the earliest date at which we can put its cessation in the Punjab is the 22nd April.'[32] Such attacks were motivated by sheer anti-government feeling. The Railway was considered a government institution and railway damage was in these cases simply a part of the destruction of government property which the mobs had burnt. There was an additional motive to prevent the arrival of troops and to make calls for assistance impossible.

'After the 10th April the railway staff in all its various classes were interfered with by people inciting them to stay away from their work and molesting them on the way to their duties. On the 12th a large proportion of the men in the locomotive shops failed to present themselves. At Shakurpur, the locomotive, carriage, wagon and traffic staff struck work on the 13th...This strike spread to Delhi-Kishanganj just outside the Punjab....At Ambala there was a short strike of the traffic staff, but this was not very serious. These facts are sufficient to illustrate the reality of the apprehension that disorders arising among the general public would combine, with special grievances on the part of railway employees, to precipitate a strike not in one department only, but in many which might for a time paralyse the railway system.'[33]

During the period of unrest, passenger trains were in general got through, though very late. The goods traffic suffered more, and in the disturbed areas, the railway as a commercial system was practically paralysed between 10th and 21st April. Derailment of trains was resorted to by the rioters in some cases. In one case an armoured train was derailed by a mob having removed the joints and opened out the rail. A rail was removed at Kala, near Jhelum and a passenger train was derailed. 'In view of the difficulties in running the traffic and also for reasons of policy which weighed with both the military and the civil authorities, passenger traffic was severely' restricted for a time, especially after the 14th April.

The committee also gave details about the causes of these disturbances in its report. These were the arrests and deportations of Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, Home Rule Movement and its self-determination principles, promulgation of Defence of India Act, post-war problems, Rowlatt Bills, passive resistance, civil disobedience campaign, all-India *hartals* on 30 March and 6 April, and Gandhi's arrest. 'In the situation as it presented itself day by day to the Punjab

Government, there were grounds for the gravest anxiety....Apart from the existence of any deeply laid scheme to overthrow the British, a movement which had started in rioting and became a rebellion might have rapidly developed into a revolution.'

The application of martial law and its necessity under the existing circumstances in the punjab was also dealt with by the committee. 'It is a question of fact, and on the information submitted to us, we think that the answer should be given in the affirmative...'Open rebellion', we think, apt and accurate: as a question of inference it appears to us to be the natural and the only inference.'

'The Amritsar incidents may be regarded as the high water mark of the disorders, though the outbreak at Kasur on the 12th is hardly distinguishable. Gujranwala on the 14th exhibits the same anti-government features...The acts of the mob at Lahore upon the 10th and the 13th show an equally marked defiance of constituted authority and a direct relation with the Amritsar outbreak...Where the Government is British and a comparatively insignificant member of the inhabitants, are Europeans, most of them Government servants, and this intention is seen to eliminate at prominent points in a murderous attack on Europeans simply as such, it may be said with some certainty that the government so attacked is in face of an open rebellion in all reasonable implications of the phrase'.[34]

As regards the extension of martial law to Gujrat and Lyallpur districts, the committee opined. 'In neither district were the actual outbreaks so serious as in the others and in both it is clear that disturbances were spreading in imitation of or by contagion from Amritsar and Gujranwala. The form which seemed to spread most easily and which threatened to become the gravest was the attack upon the telegraphs and railway.

'Under Regulation X of 1804, we do not find that the discretion given to the Governor-General-in-Council is restricted when open rebellion has broken out in part of the territories under his jurisdiction, so as to limit by any technical considerations other than those of expediency and sound policy the area over which martial law may be proclaimed. In our opinion the situation which had arisen in the Punjab was one of extreme gravity and the authorities were justified in declaring martial law and partially suspending the ordinary tribunals in the different districts to which martial law was applied..'[35]

As regards martial law orders and cases arising out of the breach thereof, the committee opined that in several important respects martial law assumed an intensive form. 'It was not being administered in any enemy country but in a country where, on the restoration of normal conditions it was advisable that martial law administration should leave behind as little feeling of bitterness and unfairness as possible. Some of the orders issued were injudicious. They served no good purpose and were not, in our opinion, drawn with sufficient tact to prevent undue annoyance to the civil population.'

The most criticised of these orders was probably, what had come to be known as General Dyer's crawling order. The committee was critical of such an inhuman order affecting directly the honour and dignity of a common Indian. If therefore, observed, 'the order is certainly open to the objection that it caused unnecessary inconvenience to a number of people and that it unnecessarily punished innocent as well as guilty. Above all, from an administrative point of view in subjecting the Indian population to an act of humiliation, it has continued to be a cause of bitterness and racial ill-feeling long after it was recalled'.

Another order open to similar objection was the *salaaming* order pronounced by General Campbell on 22nd April 1919. This order was as follows. 'Where it has come to may notice that certain inhabitants of the Gujranwala District are habitually exhibiting a lack of respect for gazetted or commissioned European Civil and Military Officers of His Majesty's Service thereby failing to maintain the dignity of that government. I hereby order that the inhabitants of the Gujranwala District shall accord to all such officers, whenever met, the salutation usually accorded to Indian gentlemen of high social position in accordance with the customs of India. That is to say persons riding on animals or on or in wheeled conveyance will alight, persons carrying opened and raised umbrellas shall lower them, and all persons shall salute or *salaam* with the hand'. The committee had a word of criticism for such an order, 'It may be right that during the administration of martial law all the civilian population should *salaam* or salute officers of His Majesty's Services. The marks of respect, however, mentioned in the order which were shown by social inferiors to their social superiors are practically no longer in observance. No good object was served by making all Indians whatever their station, shown these signs of respect to all Commissioned Officers.'

The infliction of sentences of flogging by area officers for offences committed against martial law orders was subject to criticism in some respects. When martial law was declared, triangles or whipping posts were set up in Amritsar near the Fort and at some other places in the city. The Committee opined, 'We are of opinion that even under martial law administration, no flogging should take place in public.'

The members of the committee who gave the minority report, thought that in Delhi a difficult situation was handled with tact and restraint by the Chief Commissioner. In Ahmedabad, the Collector dealt with a sudden and grave outburst of mob fury with discretion and judgment. 'In Ahmedabad where the atrocities committed by the unruly mob were as bad as those at Amritsar, Martial Law was never proclaimed, only one or two orders which were considered necessary by the military authorities for restoration of order were issued and remained in force only for two days and nothing was done savouring of a desire to punish the whole population or to teach them a lesson for the events of the 10th and 11th April. Ahmedabad was the birth place of *Satyagraha* Movement with the offshoot of civil disobedience and intensive propaganda was carried on in the districts of Ahmedabad and Kaira but no repressive measures were undertaken.'[36]

The numbers did not agree in the view that the riots in the Punjab were in the nature of a rebellion. To suggests that they had the elements of a revolution and might have rapidly developed into one was an exaggerated view of the events which was not justified.

About the mob activity and the firing at Amritsar, the committee stated, 'With regard to the events at Amritsar, we are unable to hold that the crowd as they were going over the bridge, and before they had been fired upon or turned back, were crying out, 'where is the Deputy Commissioner? We will butcher him to pieces.'[37]

'We think it is not correct to say that the firing was in no sense the cause of the excesses on the 10th April. The excesses committed by the mob on that day were altogether inexcusable and nothing that had happened afforded any justification for them. But on the evidence before us, we think that it is true that the crowds, when they started to go to the Deputy Commissioner and came on the bridge, had no intention of committing any excesses. After the firing they lost their heads and seized by a mad frenzy started on their nefarious work. This is supported by the statement of Mr. Miles Irving.'[38]

The committee gave its verdict on the question whether these events were in the nature of rebellion as commonly understood, that is, a rising for the purpose of turning out the British government and were the result of an organised movement for that end. On the basis of the evidence, the dissenting members stated that there was no rebellion of any kind nor any organisation for the purpose. Besides, there was no organisation even for bringing about the disturbances and the atrocities which are committed by the mobs seized by the frenzy of the movement. 'The Punjab Government in their case presented to us take the view that the disturbances cannot be rightly attributed to an organisation for that purpose, but must be referred mainly to local causes...Speaking about Amritsar where the worst disorders took place, the Punjab Government say, "that certain local factors resulted in turning what started as a protest in force against the deportation of Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal into mob-violence marked by murder, pillage and incendiarism."

At Lahore, the disturbances followed the reported arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and the news of outrages at Amritsar. At Gujranwala, the actual disorder was due rather to the desire to emulate the outrages of the mob at Lahore and Amritsar rather than to any long premediated organisation for violent ends. Similarly, at Kasur, Gujrat and other places, the record of the disturbances disclosed no evidence of any kind of political organisation wedded to the cult of violence.

Similarly, the conclusion arrived at by an investigation conducted by the police chief of Delhi clarified the disputed point of rioting by a mob in the city. He stated that the rioting in Delhi was not the outcome of conspiracy against the British *Raj* but it was the natural consequence of economic hardships and political unrest. He further said that it was never intended by the members of the *Satyagraha Sabha* or others that their activities should result in violence. He added that he could find no connection between the Delhi disturbances and the disturbances in other places.

'The marked deferences as regards certain essential features in the disturbances at different places also negative any common design. While in Amritsar and Ahmedabad the mobs, when they lost self-control and started on their nefarious work, brutally assaulted and killed Europeans and destroyed government and public property, it was quite otherwise, in Lahore and Delhi. During the disturbed time of the 10th of April and the following days, there was no determined attempt at

Lahore to molest Europeans or attack banks or public buildings. Similarly, in Delhi, throughout the period of the disturbances from the 30th March to the 17th April, there was never any attempt made to damage government or public buildings or any attack on European as such.'[39]

'To prove their contention that it was not a rebellion, the dissenting members opined that in no place were the mobs provided with any fire-arms or swords or other weapons of that character. At no time was any attempt made by the crowds to obtain arms by raiding the houses of licence holders or the ammunition ships in the disturbed areas.'[40] In several cases; in the beginning of the disturbances, people had not come armed even with *lathis* or sticks.

At Amritsar, when the crowd first started to go to the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow, they were bareheaded and barefooted and had no sticks in their hands. It was after they had been turned back by the firing that some of them armed themselves with sticks and pieces of wood from a shop near the Railway Station.

Moreover, no serious attempt appeared to have been made to involve the rural population to join the disturbances. The official evidence was unanimous that the rural population, as a whole, had nothing to do with these disturbances. In fact, Lt. Colonel Smithers who had been commanding a mobile column for the maintenance of law and order, happened to visit various areas in the Lahore district and reported thus to General Beynon, 'My impression as regards the loyalty of the district was that outside the larger towns the country folk seemed contented. They were at the time busy in cutting their crops and did not appear interested in anything else. Most outlying villages had not even heard of the Rowlatt Bill. I never heard Lahore mentioned in the district I traversed expect that they had heard of riots there.'[41]

To strengthen their point of view the dissenting members argued that the anti-government or anti-British form the disturbances took was a sudden development at the time. The Punjab government testified to the fact that on the 30th March and 6th April, when the *hartal* took place and on the 9th April which was the *Ram Naumi* day, there was no hostility or even discourtesy shown at Amritsar to Europeans who could move freely in the town. Beside it was not correct to say that at Gujranwala, Kasur and other places, the violent acts committed by the mob were more or less the result of a sudden determination to resort to such acts. In the town of Lahore itself the actual happenings in the way

of destruction of life and property were of so trivial a character that it would be a misnomer to describe them as acts of rebellion. In fact, there was no damage done to any property, government or private, and there was no attempt to attack Europeans as such.

The dissenting members had a word of criticism in connection with the promulgation of martial law in the Punjab. According to them the introduction of Martial law as a preventive measure was not justified. In fact, there was not much fear of the recrudescence of the disturbances which were short level and the prevailing situation was well in hand and was capable of being dealt with without taking the extreme step of introducing martial law. The speedy trial and punishment of offenders could have been secured by other means and could not be a sufficient justification for introducing martial law. 'To suggest that Martial law may be introduced a punitive measure was, on the face of it, indefensible.

The dissenting members severally indicted General Dyer and his action in Jallianwala Bagh . 'General Dyer wanted by his action at the Jallianwala Bagh to create a wide impression and a great-mortal effect. We have not doubt that he did succeed in creating a very wide impression and a great moral effect, but of a character quite opposite to the one he intended. The story of innocent people not engaged in any acts of violence but assembled in a meeting, has undoubtedly produced such a sleep impression throughout the length and breadth of the country, so prejudicial to the British Government that it would take a good deal and a long time to rub it out. The action of General Dyer as well as some acts of the martial law administration.... have been compared to the acts of "frightfulness" committed by some of the German military Commanders during the war in Belgium and France.

'General Dyer thought that he had crushed the rebellion and Sir Micheal O'Dwyer was of the same view. There was no rebellion which required to be crushed. We feel that General Dyer by adopting an inhuman and un-British method of dealing with subjects of His Majesty the King Emperor, has done great disservice to the interest of British rule in India. This aspect it was not possible for the people of the mentality of Generally Dyer to realise'.[42]

The bombing of some areas in Gujranwala and machine-gunning of innocent people there was another point of indictment by the dissenting members. 'We are of opinion that looking to the inherent difficulties in regulating the operations of an aeroplane on a town, consisting of a large number of innocent people, the danger of a person

in the aeroplane unfamiliar with the two not being able to make out unmistakably whether any particular people are peacefully engaged or otherwise and the consequent risk of hurting innocent people, are so grave that the use of aeroplanes in case of such disturbances is to be deprecated'.[43]

The 'fancy punishments' awarded to people at Kasur by Captain Deveton did not escape the notice of the dissenting members.[44] In a number of cases, he ordered people to be taken to the goods shed to load and unload bales for a day or two. In the case of those who were so ordered to work for a day, they were allowed to go home for the night on depositing some of their belongings as security for their returning the next morning. 'We think this, in effect, amounted to rigorous imprisonment while they were so at work in the goods shed.'

The dissenting members criticised the way people were arrested and tried under martial law. People were arrested on mere suspicion and kept in custody for considerable periods. Some of them were never brought to trial and others brought before the court had to be discharge because there was absolutely no evidence against them. The members considered it a very unsatisfactory feature that people were kept for many days under arrest without being brought before a court and remanded, and facilities for bail were unnecessarily curtailed, even with regard to bailable offences.

The sentences passed by the martial law commissions were considerably reduced by government. Our of 108 death sentences, only 23 were maintained and the remaining were commuted to transportation in some cases, and in the rest to sentences of imprisonment going down to one year. Out of 265 sentences of transportation, only 2 were maintained, 5 were commuted altogether and the rest were commuted to imprisonments varying from one year to ten years. The members were critical of the system which operated with regard to these sentences. They stated, 'There is a great disproportion between the original sentences and those to which they were commuted and this gives ground for the suggestion of initial severity that has been made.'

REFERENCES

1. On 13 November 1919, H.G. Stokes resigned on account of his ill-health, and on 24 November, H. William son a senior police official was appointed to succeed him as secretary.

2. See the resolution of the Government of India, Home Department, dated 14 October 1919, in the preface, *Disorders Inquiry Committee Report*, 1919-20, Calcutta, 1920.
3. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 1-142 and 145-236.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-3.
9. Officer in Charge of revenue collection in a subdivision of a district.
10. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 18-9.
11. Madhavlal, a revenue official, was burnt alive with kerosene oil by the mob.
12. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, p. 35.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
14. His skull was battered in —apparently by a straining screw.
15. The assault has not been detailed by an eye-witness.
16. They were Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal.
17. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 39-40.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
19. .....'Any person found in the streets after 8 p. m. are liable to be shot. No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets in the city...'
20. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, p. 50.
21. Anarkali and the Mall witnessed huge processions.
22. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 54-55.
23. Bludgeon army.
24. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 58-59.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
26. A town situated eight miles away from Kasur.
27. Situated at a distance of 36 miles from Lahore; its population was 30,000.
28. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 70 ff.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. Cattle fodder.

32. The Director, Telegraph Engineering, Northern Circle, reported that between 10th April and 21st April 1919 there were fifty-four such outrages.
33. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 90-91.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
37. This allegation rested only on the testimony of Jiwan Lal, Inspector, Criminal Investigation Department. The committee did not rely on this evidence in the absence of any corroborative evidence.
38. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, p. 147.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
40. Lt. Colonel Johnson told the committee that there were 1709 !icence holder in Lahore. The question was put to him, 'Am I right in supposing that if the people of these provinces had been bent on rebellion that (possessing arms) would have been the first thing they would have been the first thing they would have done? His answer was, 'I say that is my opinion. I think you are right.'
41. Disorders Inquiry Committee Report, pp. 157-158.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
44. These punishments are referred in the majority report.

5

The Congress Committee

The leaders of the Indian National Congress did not expect a true picture of the gruesome tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh and the atrocities perpetrated on people after the promulgation of Martial Law in the Punjab. They therefore appointed a committee on 14 November 1919 and its members[1] were M.K. Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Fazlul Haq, C.R. Das, and Abbas Tyabji, and K. Santanam was the secretary. They were to examine, sift, collate and analyse the evidence already collected by and on behalf of the sub-committee regarding the tragic events which occurred in April 1919 in some of the districts of the Punjab, and to supplement such evidence, where necessary, and thus to present their conclusions.[2]

The Congress Committee entered upon their work on 17th November 1919 and concluded their findings on 20 February 1920. They examined the statements of over 1700 witnesses and selected for publication about 650 statements. Every admitted statement was verified by one of them and was accepted only after they were satisfied as to the *bona fides* of the witness. It is evident that some of the witnesses had made a very serious allegations against officials. 'In each and every case the witnesses were warned by us of the consequences of making those allegations and they were admitted only when the witnesses adhered to their statements, in spite of the knowledge of the risk they personally ran and the damage that may ensure to the cause by reason of exaggeration or untruth. We have moreover rejected those statements which could not be corroborated, although in some cases we were inclined to believe the witnesses. Such, for instance were, the statements regarding ill-treatment of women.'

This inquiry was confined to the Martial Law excesses and the principal places covered in the report were Lahore, Amritsar, Taran Taran, Kasur Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Chuharkana, Lyallpur, Gujarat,

Malakawal and Sargodha. The Commissioners made use of the evidence led before the Disorders Inquiry Committee. Majority of the statements were given in the vernaculars which were translated later on. They also studied the records of the trials by martial law or summary courts.

The committee dealt with the nature of administration set up under Michael O'Dwyer in Punjab since his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor in 1913. He signalled his rule by 'contemptuous' references to proposals for reforms. It was followed by action under Press Act. Security was demanded from several varnacular newspapers and the security already deposited was forfeited in some cases. He 'abused' the powers given to him by the Defence of India Act interned hundreds of local men with little or no cause.

'As I proceeded further and further with my inquiry into the atrocities' Gandhi wrote in his *Autobiography,* 'that had been committed on the people, I came across tales of Government's tyranny and the arbitrary despotism of its officers such as a I was hardly prepared for, and they filled me with deep pain. What surprised me then, and what still continues to fill me with surprise, was the fact, that a province, that had furnished the largest number of soldiers to the British Government during the war, should have taken all these brutal excesses lying down.'[3]

About the Congress report, Gandhi has given an objective assessment. 'All that I wish to say here about it is that there is not a single conscious exaggeration in it anywhere, and every statement made in it is substantiated by evidence. Moreover, the evidence published was only a fraction of what was in the Committee's possession. Not a single statement, regarding the validity of which there was the slightest room for doubt, was permitted to appear in the report. This report, prepared as it was solely with a view to bringing out the truth, and nothing but the truth, will enable the reader to see to what lengths the British Government is capable of going, and what inhumanities and barbarities it is capable of perpetrating in order to maintain its power. So far as I am aware, not a single statement made in this report, has ever been disproved.'[4]

Jawaharlal Nehru narrated in his *Autobiography* thus: 'Deshbandhu Das especially took the Amritsar area under his charge and I was deputed to accompany him there and assist him in any way he desired. That was the first occasion I had of working with him and under him and I valued that experience very much and my admiration

for him grew. Most of the evidence relating to Jallianwala Bagh and that terrible lane where human beings were made to crawl on their bellies, that subsequently appeared in the Congress Inquiry Report, was taken down in our presence. We paid numerous visits to the so called Bagh itself and examined every bit of it carefully.'[5]

The Congress Committee reported that, 'All this popular demonstration and unfoldment of national consciousness would have gladdened any ruler with imagination and sympathy with popular aspirations. It only enraged Sir Michael O'Dwyer. He was angry that his orders...instead of cowing down the people, had only made them bolder and more articulate in their demands. Therefore practically at the same time that the popular demonstration was going on in an orderly, perfectly constitutional manner, an order was being forged in the Punjab Government Secretariat which was to destroy and disturb the people's peace; for the Lieutenant-Governor had decided to deport Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal.

'The provocation given by the deportation of their beloved leaders to the people of Amritsar was grave and uncalled for. This was doubled when the unarmed crowd was prevented from proceeding on its peaceful errand, and upon becoming insistent was fired on...It is difficult to say what would have happened, if the mob had been allowed to proceed to the Deputy Commissioner's banglow and there had its prayer rejected as it was likely to be. It would have largely depended on the way the Deputy Commissioner dealt with them. It must be granted that the crowd was in an assertive mood, and if the authorities thought that the crowd would have acted in a violent manner, we are not prepared to blame for checking its advance. Our study of the evidence led before the Martial Law Commissions, of the official evidence led before Lord Hunter's Committee and the evidence collected by us, leads to the conclusion that there was no warrant for the firing. The authorities omitted all the intermediate stages that are usually resorted to in all civilised countries. There was no parleying, no humouring and no use of milder force. Immediately the crowd became insistent, the order to fire was given. In this country, it has become too much the custom with the executive and the military never to run and risk, or to put it in another way, to count Indian life very cheap.'[6]

The adverse comments against the inactivity and vacilation shown by the police force posted at the *Kotwali* police station, Amritsar, were

levelled and it was questioned if these excesses could have been prevented and innocent lives of the people could have been saved. In fact the *Kotwali* police station was a portion of the same block as the Town Hall. There were sufficient numbers of the police force stationed at the *Kotwali* and the crowd did not even touch it while it burnt the adjoining Town Hall with impunity. Besides most of the other buildings burnt were within a stone's throw of the *Kotwali.* The police had also intimation of the fact that the banks were being set fire to. It was the duty of the police to have bestirred themselves and, even at the peril of their lives, at least tried to save the Englishmen who were murdered.[7]

The proclamation issued by General Dyer did not escape the attention of the Congress Committee. It was read out by an interpreter in Punjabee and Urdu, at intervals, during Dyer's tour through the city, which as he stated occupied two or three hours. The drum was beaten to gather the people. A map was handed to the General indicating the places at which the proclamation was read, and he admitted that it was not read in many parts of the city. 'We have examined the map of the city with the route marked. More than one, half, and that the most populous part of the city was left, untouched by the General. There is abudant evidence to show that very few citizens knew anything about the proclamation. Moreover, the 13th April was, as stated before, the Baisakhi, Hindu New Year's day, and many people from surrounding villages were streaming in, who knew nothing of the proclamation. That such people did not come and could not have heard the proclamation is admitted by the official witnesses.'[8]

The committee severely criticised the action of General Dyer and held him and Michael O'Dwyer responsible for the massacre at Amritsar. The meeting of the 13th furnished a ready chance and General Dyer seized it. Mr. C.F. Andrews has called it a massacre, even like the Glenco Massacre. If there can be degrees in assessing values of inhumanities, we consider that the massacre of Glenco was infinitely worse than the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, but the standard of correctness, exacted today, was not the standard set in the Millitary Manuals of the days of the Glenco Massacre. In our opinion, even the people who heard proclamation had not understood the significance or the meaning of the prohibitory part of it. Not a single man went to that meeting in open defiance of the proclamation. No provocation whatever was given to the Military Authorities and nothing either in Amritsar or outside it, justified the massacre. It was a calculated act of inhumanity,

and if the British Rule in India is to be purged of this inexcusable wrong, General must be immediately relived of his command and brought to justice.'[9]

The fact that Michael O'Dwyer approved of his action was indeed highly questionable. He was a trustee for the inhabitants of the Punjab who had endorsed a crime against humanity. Even under Martial Law, *de fecto or die jure,* certain canons of decency are obligatory on Commanding Officers and General Dyer totally disregarded them. 'We repeat that we do not, in any shape or form, desire to defend or minimise either the murders of Englishmen or incendiarism. We believed that they are indefensible, but no deeds, however dastardly, of an enraged mob can warrant a slaughter or innocent people, such as General Dyer was guilty of.'[10]

The Congress Committee severely criticised the crawling order at Amritsar in connection with the indecent of Miss Sherwood. I opined that the deliberateness or the depravity of the punishment could not well be surpassed. Miss Sherwood was assaulted on the 10th of April and the crawling order was promulgated on the 19th. And it had to be obeyed by those who might never seen Miss Sherwood. 'They might have, as the vast majority of the residents of Amritsar must have, deplored the cowardly assault on her. It was such men who had to undergo the punishment. It is difficult to characterize a mind that invents and takes pleasure inflicting a punishment, whose object is merely to degrade man's state.'[11]

The committee advanced its negative verdict on the heinous punishment of persons by flogging in public. It opined that such a punishment was not only humiliating but it was torturing and it was difficult to know why flogging was administered at all. Official evidence shows that flogging was administered for the so called breach of fort discipline, and as to those who were suspected that he wanted to lash them in the crawling lane. Thus six boys were flogged on the both. Each of them was fastened to the *tiktiki* (triangle) and given 30 stripes.[12]

The committee reported numerous cases of tortures by police of innocent and respectable persons of Amritsar and criticised the ways and methods used by the local administration.[13] 'Seth Gul Mohammad, a glassware merchant, was arrested on the 20th April, while he was offering prayer, and taken to the *Kotwali.* He was asked to give false evidence. Inspector Jawaharlal caught hold of his beard and slapped

him so heard that it made him reel for a while. He then asked him to state. "Doctors Satyapal and Kitchlew had instigated me to bring about the *hartal* on the 6th and that they had encouraged me, by saying that they would use bombs to drive out the English from the country." The witness refused. the officer then asked his underlings to take him aside and make him "alright". He was then taken away a few paces from the officer's table and asked by a number of constables to please Jawaharlal by doing what he wanted. He still refused. So they caught hold of his hand and placed it under the leg of a cot, over which eight constables sat, "When the pain became unbearable" the witness proceeds, "I cried out, leave my hand, I will do whatever you ask me to do." He was then taken to Jawaharlal again. But he again refused to implicate the Doctors. He was, therefore, kept confined in a room that day. During the two following days, he was beaten, slapped and caned. He was told that he would be made an accused and hanged. This beating went on for eight days. On the eighth day, he again agreed to make the desired statement. He was then taken to Aga Ibrahim, the Magistrate, before whom he repeated the same "untrue statement," that was required of him. Hansraj, the approver, who was also in the *Kotwali* advised him to do as the police asked. After ten days' detention, he was let off on the condition that he appeared at the *Kotwali* from day to day, which he did upon the 9th of June, when he was taken to Lahore. On the 16th of June, he was produced before the Martial Law Tribunal, where he made a clean breast of the whole thing and told the Judges that he was tortured.

'Brijlal, a boy of 14 years old, was kept under custody for 9 days. After two days, he was made over to Hansraj and was induced to make a false statement before the Martial Law Tribunal, which he retracts in the evidence before us.

'Sardar Atma Singh, a wine merchant, was arrested in front of General Dyer on the 13th April, He was made to walk with the procession and he adds, "They tied a cloth round one of my arms and dragged me along with them through several streets of the city." He was prevented by a British soldier from getting some water to drink. Some others were arrested also during the day, and nine of them were handcuffed and confined in a cell without food. On the 15th, they were taken before the General and were all tied to a tree, "constantly abused and laughed at." After the General had finished his 'lunch, they were produced before him. Then Sardar Atma Singh was sentenced to 8 days' quarter-guard. He was never told what the charge against him was.

During his incarceration, he was relieved by a servant of his gold ring and a West End hunting watch bearing his name.

'Muhammad Ismail, butcher, was arrested about the 18th April. His father was also arrested and both were beaten and were released only after his brother Dina was produced. Dina himself was detained for 3 days, and is said to have been mercilessly beaten.

'Lala Raliaram, pensioner, 58 years old, was asked by Sub-Inspector to give the names of those who had beaten Miss Sherwood. He replied that he knew nothing, as he was not present. Whereupon, he was beaten with a cane, his beard was pulled and he was made to walk up and down the lane and set free in the evening.

'Lala Dadu Mal was beaten and made to crawl. He and his son were arrested, and he was discharged and rearrested, and at last let off, after he had paid one hundred rupees to the headman of the bazaar for the police. He was rearrested and was compelled to pay fifty rupees more and purchase his release. The police used to go to his shop and forcibly took away cream etc. for their use. His son was detained for 8 days and was then given 30 stripes, although during the process, he became unconscious. He witnessed others also being flogged. He says, "These men shrieked with pain and were all bleeding."

'Lala Rakharam saw Dhaniram who was made to sit down and catch hold of his ears after passing his hands under his legs.

'Gholam Qadir Toopgar was arrested during the third week of April by Sub-Inspector Amir Khan. He was asked to point out the looted property, and he was beaten severely, when he pleaded ignorance. He was asked to give the names of certain persons as members of the mob that had burnt and looted the Bhagtanwala Railway Station. His turban was taken off, his hands were tied with it and he was suspended from a tree for about 10 minutes. He saw 8 or 9 men, besides himself being subjected to torture. He says, "I saw Peera Gujar lying flat on the ground and a *Havaldar,* whom I know by face, pushed a stick into his anus in the presence of sub-Inspector Amir Khan. He cried piteously all the time, but the police showed no mercy. For full 3 days and nights we were not allowed any food, during which period we were subjected to police torture, I was released after 5 days."

Mr. Gurdial Singh Salaria, Bar-at-Law was also arrested. He was one of those, who, in common with others, at the period of his life, tried to go on the 10th April to push the crowd back from the bridge. He

describes also the indignities he had to suffer. He remained in custody from the 23rd of May to the 5th July.

'The paragraphs, we have denoted to indiscriminate arrests and tortures for the purpose of extorting evidence furnish perhaps the blackest chapter in the whole of the story of the cruelties perpetrated in the name of martial law. The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh was staggering for its dramatic effect. But the slow torture of the arrests was felt not only by those who suffered but by those also who were always in fear of being arrested, for, from the evidence collected by us it is clear that there was no method about these arrests. All classes and conditions of people came in for this treatment. Nobody had a feeling of safety.

'We would here add that we had copious evidence about bribes having been freely taken by the police. But we have refrained from taking evidence on this point for Amritsar, because the witnesses, whilst they gave us their confidence, were unwilling to disclose their names. If the government wish to know the truth about this class of corruption, we suggest the holding of an inquiry, with a promise of protection to those who would come forward to give their evidence.

'Not much need be said to show that where there was an organised attempt made to procure false evidence, there must have been serious and extensive abortion of justice, during the trails that took place, whether before the Martial Law Commissions, the Summary Courts of Area Officers. It may not be amiss to describe the constitution of these courts. The Martial Law Commissions were composed of 3 members, clothed with summary jurisdiction and possessing the power to inflict death sentence. They were not bound to record any evidence, and their judgements were unapealable. The Summary Courts, on the other hand, contained only one members, usually a Magistrate, and they became the courts of inferior jurisdiction, having power to a ward imprisonment upon two ears and to impose fines up to Rs. 1,000. Their judgements also were final and unappealable to any superior Court. We have examined the published records of the trials before these courts and the statics published by the government, and we have come to the conclusion that the majority of the convictions are wholly bad. In the Amritsar district, according to the statistical abstract, 188 were tried before the Martial Law Commissions, of whom 3 were acquitted. Before the Summary Courts and Area Officers, 173 were tried, and 32 acquitted, discharged or released.

'...it may be mentioned that cases, involving transportation for life with forfeiture of property as the minimum penalty, were based on such charges as organising the *hartal* or making speeches on the Rowlatt Act. Leading men were charged with serious offences on no better evidence than that of an approver.

'We shall close our examination of the Amritsar events with the remark that the authorities committed a criminal blunder in secretly deporting Doctors Kitchlew and Satyapal; that there was at least undue haste in firing; that, had they acted with tact and consideration, then, in spite of the deportation, the mob excesses would have been prevented; that the excesses were, in any event, deplorable and deserving of condemnation; that the massacre in the Jallianwala Bagh was an act of inhumanity and vengeance, unwarranted by anything that then existed or has since transpire; that, on General Dyer's own showing, the introduction of Martial Law in Amritsar was not justified by any local causes, and that its prolongation was a wanton abuse of authority, and its administration unworthy of a civilised government.

The committee felt unhappy over the happenings in Lahore which was under the command of Colonel Johnson of African fame from 5th April to 29th May 1919. His administration was so sweeping that it made itself felt by all classes of people, high and low, not excluding the students, numbering several thousands, studying in the various colleges. The tallest had to bend before his iron rule. The curfew order in Lahore became intolerable. Even those who required medical help had to remain without such assistance, and when the difficulty was appointed out to this official by a prominent local citizen, Pandit Jagat Narayan, he promptly stated, 'You cannot wage war without having to suffer such hardships.' 'An officer, holding the responsible position that Col. Johnshon did, ought not to have used a technical legal phrase in respect of a state of things, which by no stretch of reasoning could be called "waging a war." It was a prostitution of terms to apply the expression to a state of things that existed in Lahore, or, for that matter, in the Punjab. We have read all the evidence produced before Lord Hunter, and we have been unable to notice a single fact or argument in support of the statement that the Punjab was "waging war against the King." Col. Johnson was obliged to admit that people never made use of arms anywhere. Those who had arms, which they could have freely used, neither used them themselves nor allowed others to make use of them....Many of those who broke the curfew order, knowingly or

unknowingly, reasonably, or unreasonably were publicly whipped like common and incorrigible criminals.'[14]

The committee was critical of the administrative decisions of Col. Johnson in Lahore which had made the lives of the local population difficult and unbearable. 'In our opinion....Col. Johnson had used barbarous arguments in order to support a barbarous punishment, and this fact alone makes him unfit for holding a responsible position, such as was entrusted to him by the Punjab government. Nor were these the only punishment of whipping awarded. He had given those that were recorded by the summary courts, but the unrecorded punishments were perhaps more numerous than the recorded ones. Over 170 statements collected by us from Lahore go to show conclusively that the temper shown by the highest officers of the crown had filtered down to the lowest, and in so filtering had reached such a fineness that it was ruffled on the slightest pretext and was allowed to have its full play upon the populace, without any restraint worthy of the name.'[15]

The tortuous orders passed against the students community, in the city of Lahore were verified by the committee. Chimanlal Setalvad asked Col. Johnson searching questions which proved the working of his mind in a way which was undoubtedly highly prejudiced and scornful.

Question : The Sanatan Dharam College was one of the buildings selected for putting up that notice?[16]

Answer : I believe it was.

Question : It was not in the first list prominent, though it was but subsequently added?

Answer : Yes, the list was recast afterwards.

Question : And the notice stuck on the outer walls of this college was torn down by someone?

Answer : That was the information laid before me, not by police, but by somebody.

Question : It is true that all the students of the hostels of the college were arrested?

Answer : I ordered that every male found on the premises should be arrested.

Question : How many were arrested?

Answer : 500.

Question : 500 students were arrested for this notice being damaged?

Answer : And the professors too.

Question : All of them so arrested were marched to the fort which is three miles away from the college?

Answer : Quite.

Question : And during that march they were ordered to carry their beddings on their shoulders or heads?

Answer : If they wanted to carry their beddings, they could.

Question : Were they not made to carry them?

Answer : I made no order as to that, if they wanted to carry them, they could.

Question : On a Lahore summer day?

Answer : It was a May day.

Question : It was very hot in Lahore?

Answer : Yes.

Question : All these 500 students and professors were marched a distance of three miles?

Answer : Quite.

Question : And they were kept under orders in the fort?

Answer : Yes, that is so.

Question : How long were they kept there?

Answer : I think one day. I beg your pardon, two days.

Question : They were then released after taking from the Principal certain undertakings as to their seeing that the notices were preserved?

Answer : Yes, after I got the necessary guarantee that such a thing would not happen again.

Question : I put it you. Colonel, do you think that the measure that you took was a reasonable one?

Answer : Yes, I was looking for it. I was looking just for such an opportunity.

Question : You considered it then, and you consider it now, a reasonable order to make?

Answer : Undoubtedly.

Question : Your frame of mind, then, Colonel, was as you indicated in your report, that you were waiting for an opportunity to bring home to them the power of Martial Law?

Answer : That was so.

Question : You were longing for such an opportunity?

Answer : Only in the interests of the people themselves.

Question : I do not suggest that it was not in their interest. It may or may not be. But you were longing for an opportunity to show the might of Martial Law?

Answer : Quite

Question : You got that opportunity?

Answer : And, took it.

Question : And you took it and marched these 500 students to the fort in the hot sun?

Answer : That is so.

Question : And you will maintain, that was a proper exercise of your authority?

Answer : Absolutely, I will do it again tomorrow, if circumstances require.[17]

The committee indicated, 'It should be remembered that the last cold-blooded reply of Col. Johnson was given, not whilst he was in the thick of the battle, but on the 24th November 1919, nearly six months after he had left his command of Lahore. If his precious notice was wilfully defaced by any body at all, it was hid duty to make an enquiry, and not straightway proceed to punish the professors and the students. But Col. Johnson was nothing, if not thorough, and therefore he took action against the D.A.V. College, the Dyal Singh College and the Medical College, not by way of punishment but in order to keep the students 'out of mischief', and the order issued was that there was to be a roll-call of all the students, four times a day, the hours being 7 and 11 in the morning and 3 and 7-30 in the evening, "And the Medical College students, in order to attend this roll 4 times a day, had to walk in all about 17 miles a day?" was Sir Chimanlal's question. The impertinent reply given by Colonel Johnson was, "I think it was only 16. I Measured it."

Question	:	And they had to walk like this, in the hot sun of Lahore, for 3 weeks everyday.
Answer	:	That is so, unless exempted by a medical certificate.
Question	:	You thought, Colonel, then, and you still maintain the view that this was a reasonable order to make an over to keep students out of mischief?
Answer	:	That was my opinion then.
Question	:	And still it is your opinion?
Answer	:	Absolutely.
Question	:	Did it ever occur to you, and does it occur to you now, it was working upon students the utmost hardship to make them travel 16 miles everyday in the Lahore sun for three weeks?
Answer	:	No hardship at all.
Question	:	I put it to you again, Colonel, did it ever occur to you that by treating—I do not know how many hundreds, possibility thousands of students, in the manner you did, with regard to the roll-call, you were making these young men bear bitter hatred towards the British government for the rest of their lives?
Answer	:	It did, but I came to the conclusion that there was so much sedition in these colleges, that nothing that I did could make them worse.
Question	:	Do I understand to say that although it did occur to you that this treatment of yours might result in turning them bitter against the British Government, your view was that they were such confirmed seditionists that could not make them more bitter?
Answer	:	I do not accept your description, but the atmosphere of the colleges was such that you could not hurt it.
Question	:	Do you think that, by the measures you took, you were helping in the least to improve it?
Answer	:	I was certainly not making it worse.
Question	:	Were you improving it?
Answer	:	I was not out to make them loyal, but I was out to keep them out of mischief and to keep them from outlying districts.

Question	:	Did you succeed?
Answer	:	Yes.
Question	:	You think that is the best way?
Answer	:	That is the best way, I could think of. There are two ways: One is to close the colleges, and the other is to prosecute them.
Question	:	I take it to be your view that the best way of making people in this country loyal and well disposed towards government is to adopt more harsh measures towards them?
Answer	:	I put it in the other way, by teaching that there is a penalty for such suspected sedition.
Question	:	Did it ever occur to you that these thousands of students there must have been a larger number of perfectly innocent ones.
Answer	:	Yes, I gave exemption to some.[18]

Colonel Johnson thaught that students had insulted English ladies. But the committee found nothing to justify this charge. He had himself produced nothing in support of his opinion, but he had on that account a meeting of the principals of the colleges. He had a frank talk with them and asked them to submit proposals for adequate punishments. The principals came out with what was suitable punishment in their view. He considered that some of the punishments were inadequate and he promptly informed the principals that 'unless the punishments were raised, the colleges would be closed and the students would be stopped from attending the examinations." In this way, a thousand and eleven students were punished.

The Committee also discussed, in some details, the kinds of oppression practised in its veiled from in the name of law, order and justice. It referred to the doings of the Martial Law commissions. These commissions were supposed to constitute a judicial, but summary trial of persons who were supposed to have committed serious crimes *i.e.*, waging war. The committee examined the papers in connection with the trial of various Lahore leaders. They were eleven in number, most of them occupying high social status in the society. Seven of the were barristers or pleaders. One such prominent person was Harkishen Lal who stated that the was charged because Michael O'Dwyer felt jealous of his reputation as successful financier and also in other respects,

concerned with activities which are disliked and distasteful to the Lt. Governor. He showed in his statement how insidious attempts were made to ruin the commercial concerns and the enterprises he was managing. He, therefore, stated that his trial and conviction were based purely on fabrication and his deportation was without any kind of legal justification.[20]

The committee commented on this injustice. 'He and other leaders were tried for waging war. We have read the precis of the charge against the accused, and it consists in the accused having taken part in the Rowlatt Act agitation, in the *hartal* having made speeches, having supported *Langarkhanas* and in being present at the meetings....We have read the evidence produced against these popular leaders, and we have read also judgement, and have come to the conclusion that the whole of the trial was a travesty of justice, and it was an abuse of language to consider their acts as tantamount to the 'waging of war'. It is remarkable too that the judges took judicial notice of the state of war in the Punjab, because of the proclamation establishing Martial Law, whereas it was their clear duty, in trying individual cases, to take evidence rebutting the proposition that there was a state of rebellion or war in the Punjab. "Lala Harkishen Lal stated, "...the telegrams cost him well high Rs. 1,200 the trial another sum of Rs. 12,000 and the appeal a good round sum, but the accounts were not yet complete. Loss of business meant nothing less than 3 lacs of rupees." The committee opined, "It may mean nothing to him to lose all this money, but we are aware of some who have been improverished because of these so called judicial trials.[21]

K. Santanam, a young barrister of ten years standing and practising at Lahore, who was engaged for the defence, had furnished the committee with a graphic description of the tribunals. He described what he had seen himself of the firing on the 10th April and of the other effects of the martial law. He expressed much unhappiness and surprise at the happenings under Martial Law at Lahore. He stated, 'The consciousness of the humiliation to which every Indian, irrespective of status, was subjected in those days was however nothing in comparison to the pain one felt at the sorry plight of those poor prisoners who had been arrested in hundreds, and were being arraigned before the Martial Law Tribunals. It is no exaggeration to say that no legal help of any kind was forthcoming. The government had, no doubt, out of feeling of great humanity (one likes to think so at least), appointed a counsel for each Tribunal to take

up the case of those who could not afford to engage a lawyer to defend them. But this was colossal sham, as such a counsel had often to defend as many as 10 to 15 men at a time and that too, without any adequate time to consult them or prepare their case. Some of these gentlemen had confessed to me that in several cases they had not had as much as 5 minutes with each accused for consultation, before being asked to defend them against such serious charges as waging war, conspiracy, arson, murder etc. the procedure usually was to bring up before a Tribunal a batch of the accused, often numbering 30 and 40 who had never been told for what offences they had been arrested, to read out the charge to them and ask them then and there to name what witnesses they were going to summon in their defence. They were also told at the same time that the government would try their best to summon those witnesses, but could not guarantee that each and every one would be produced. As often as not, the precise of the evidence for the prosecution was not read out to them, nor were they allowed to take copies of the precise. Each accused was asked if he had a counsel of his own; if not, he was told that the counsel appointed by the crown would defend them. After this, they were taken back to the jail and were not allowed to see even the Crown Counsel till 9 O'clock on the morning of the day fixed for their trial which usually was 3 or 4 days after the day on which the charge was read out to them.

'The second difficulty was that most of the lawyers having taken some part of other in politics, which was anathema to the then government, were afraid that their turn might come next to be arrested, and did not want to hasten the evil day by taking up the cases of the alleged revolutionaries. The third and the most important one was that there was a general belief that the government looked upon counsel, who took up such cases, as seditionists and revolutionaries themselves and such a course was enough in itself to get a man into trouble. This idea was strengthened by the action of the Hon'ble Mian Mohammed Shafi, now a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, whom a relative of Seth Ram Pershad had engaged to defend him when he would be brought up for trial. A few days after this, Mr. Shafi returned the brief, and I have it on very reliable authority that the reason he gave was that a high officer of the government has as much as given a hint to him that such a course on his part was not looked upon with approval by the government. It can better be imagined than described what effect this incident had on the already demoralised Bar.'[22]

The committee dealt with the happenings at Kasur under the Martial Law regime. The administration of this town, a fairly large trade centre with a population of 24,000, was placed in the hands of Colonel Machae who was followed by Captain Doveton. In some respects, these two officers excelled their brother officers in their inventiveness, irresponsibility and total disregard of the feelings and sentiments of those who were affected by their orders. The first arrest was effected on the 16th April 1919. Besides there was proclamation parade at the Town Hall, and evidently, to signalize the inauguration of Martial Law, they arrested lala Dhanpat Rai, and aged and respected pleader of long standing. He was detained at the Lahore Central Jail for 46 days, and released on the 1st of June, without ever having been told why he was arrested. Besides, twenty-one further arrests were made on the same day, three more the next day, four on the 18th, and forty on the 19th . In all, 172 persons were arrested, of these 97 were discharged without being sent up for trial. Of the 75 sent up, 51 were actually convicted. The inhuman aspect of these arrests and convictions was that forty persons were sentenced to be whipped. The total member of stripes given was 710. The flogging post was erected on the platform of the Kasur Railway Station. School boys were also punished with flogging.

The committee commented, 'Kasur was the place where fancy punishments were most common. "What happened was," said Mr. Marsden, "Captain Doveton did not like to go through the formalities of trial and sentence." He wanted to do things 'summarily'. There can be no question of a record of the many punishments awarded by this capricious officer. He 'used to make people mark time and climb ladders'. By way of change some Sadhus were white-washed. Capt. Doveton denied that this was deliberate....'We totally disbelieve this explanation, and we believe the testimony of eye witnesses who have described the process. One form of punishment consisted in making the so called delinquents life heavy bales in the station warehouse. People who failed to *salam* every white man were made to rub their noses on the ground if they were not flogged...He inflicted also the punishment of skipping, which consisted in the punished people skipping 20 times without a break. He says that at least 20 people were thus punished.'[23]

The committee was unhappy about the destruction of the valuable property, including a place of devotion by a mob of people at Gujranwala. It was 'wanton and unjustified and no firing on the part of the Superintendent of Police, or even the wicked hanging of a dead

calf on the bridge, could possibly be held to justify incendiarism. The firing and, especially, the hanging of a dead calf constituted grave provocation, but they could not be pleaded in justification of excesses.'

The inhuman act of bombing at Gujranwala for the maintenance of law and order and crushing the sentiments of the people by creating awe and fear in the region did not escape notice of the committee. It recorded, 'In our opinion, all this firing from the aeroplanes was entirely unjustified. It was begun after the destruction by the mob was over, and the crowds had dispersed. There was, therefore, no question of preventing further damage. We believe, too, that the firing was thoughtless, if not vindictive and the officers in charge of the machines, on their own showing, held the lives of the villagers cheap and fired in order to terrorize the people. The casualties, according to the list supplied and embodied in the statements produced before us, amounted to 12 killed and 24 wounded, and if the loss of life was not greater, it was no fault of he officers concerned. The bombs would not explode. If there was no excuse for the bombing of the 14th, there was less to bring the aeroplane into play on the 15th, because Col. O'Brien had by that time more military aid than he needed, certainly all he had asked for'.

The committee suspected that Michael O'Dywer seemed to have been the originator of the suggestion of bombing from aeroplanes. Whether he was or not, it is evident that he had approved of it before launching this kind of action which might result into a colossal loss of human beings after the gruesome tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh. It is also obvious that the people of the Punjab consisting of a sizable portion of peasantry in the villages were not accustomed to the indiscriminate bombing. Such a bombing could only be justified in the face of imminent danger to the country by an element involved in highly subversive activities or violent action beyond the control of police or army on the land. The committee remarked with sarcasm that the European population of Gujranwala was in no danger and beside, not a single European life was lost. Instead, they were quite safe under the supervision of the custodians of Martial Law who were British officials.

The official evidence showed that bombing was recklessly practised upon an unresisting people at a time when there was no danger, threatening life or property, and when the experience of the happenings at Amritsar and Kasur had shown that the mob fury was a sudden and momentary outburst with no persistence about it. The arrests of the local prominent persons like barristers, pleaders and leaders holding social

status and some of whom had helped at considerable risk to themselves to curb the fury of the mob, had commenced on the 15th of April. 'There was at the time of these arrests, on Colonel O'Brien's own showing, not a little of evidence to justify these arrests. They were made, as he says, in virtue of regulation 12 of the Defence of India Act regulations.'[21]

Thus Colonel O'Brien had humiliated men of status and other public men; asked students to salute the Union Jack and ordered numerous persons to clean the drains in the Bazaars. Besides, people were forbidden to carry sticks and railway travelling was stopped for sometime and thee curfew order was issued, thus reducing them to a state of utter despair and helplessness. The committee remarked, 'There is abundant evidence to show that the evidence had been manufactured. The theory of rebellion practically broke down before Lord Hunter's Committee. The only ground Col. O'Brien had to give was that rebellion was 'judicially proved'. Almost every public leader was arrested. The treatment meted out to Diwan Mangal Sen and his family, the vindictive evacuation of Lala Amar Nath's house, the arrest and detention of people who were never tried, constitute a story of deliberate cruelty which was a disgrace to British Administration.'

At Wazirabad, an important town and a Railway Station, situated at a distance of twenty miles from Gujranwala, the atrocities of the Martial Law were incalculable and proverbial. In fact, no *hartal* was observed on the 30th March on the 6th April, but the crowds that had gathered from the suburban villages had brought the news of the gruesome tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar and the inhuman behaviour and tortuous attitude of the Martial Law administration in Lahore and Gujranwala. These people twitted the people of Wazirabad for not observing *hartal* as a mark so sympathy, support and respect for the people of Amritsar, Lahore and Gujranwala. They said in clear words, 'Since the people of Wazirabad did not observe *hartal,* nobody would take their girls in marriage'. So after a decision was taken by a huge gathering of the two communities in a mosque, the *hartal* came off on the 15th April. But there were some mischief-makers who were not satisfied with the mere closure of commercial centres. They cut telegraph wires and damaged the railway lines. The mob also burnt the Rev. Bailey's house[25], including his valuable literary treasures. There was no loss of life. Some of the prominent local persons attempted to check the mob excesses, with more or less success. The committee criticised the action of the mob at Wazirabad, 'The destruction of an

innocent and popular missionary's house makes the action all the more regrettable and reprehensible. We have not been able to find out any particular motive for this action, save that the mob had yielded to an a⁻ti-European fury.'[26]

At this Colonel O'Brien, arrived with an armed contingent of the police and the military arrived at Wazirabad the next day. Soon after his arrival, many persons were indiscriminately arrested and the whole of the demonstration, like that of Gujranwala, took place in Wazirabad also. Two days latter this incident, a *Darbar* was held, at which Colonel O'Brien, is reported to have used a threatening language by showing his very angry temper. He treated the members of his audience as small fry and made use of filthy and unbecoming epithets for them. 'Listen, you foolish and mad people, you had thought that the British Government had ceased. Now your madness will be cured. We have got a prescription for your madness. Be it is known to you all, that the Government has authority to confiscate the property of any person, to raze to the ground his house, nay, if it likes, it can set fire to it. Accordingly, first of all, I do hereby order that the whole property of Jamiat Singh Bagga be confiscated to the government.'[27]

Soon Martial Law was proclaimed in the town and how people suffered there under the military law and order had been described by a local doctor, Daulat Singh, late Secretary of the Arya Samaj, Wazirabad. 'Martial Law notices were posted at different places and on some buildings. These were affixed to the places and houses with which the arrested persons had connection. A set of Martial Law notices was also posted at the Arya Samaj Mandir, although the Arya Samaj had nothing to do with any of the events. I, who was against the *hartal*, and took no part whatsoever in the movement, was to be held responsible for the safe custody of the Martial Law notices, as I happened to be the Secretary of the Arya Samaj. Two persons had to be especially engaged to keep watch, and I had to go personally several times to see the notices, that no mischief-monger might tear them away or damage them. Martial Law authorities were very particular that the notices were not injured or interfered with.' It was taken as breach of Martial Law regulations to remove or deface such notices, and the occupiers of these premises to which the notices were affixed were held responsible. Consequently, Dr. Daulat Singh was arrested, and the registers of the Arya Samaj were attached and removed. He was detained for ten days and was asked to give evidence certain persons, and then discharged about the 30th May.

He was arrested once again on the 7th June. He stated how evidence was fabricated against him, how he was given no time even to engage a legal expert in his self-defence, how on the flimsiest evidence he was convicted and, above all, how Colonel O'Brien said to him, 'As Swami Shraddhananda is taking part in the agitation, you must be taking part also.'

Besides if any person did not *salam* a European by mistake or oversight, he had his turban taken off his head and tied round his neck. He was mercilessly dragged to the camp by the army soldiers and there he was either fined or flogged. One witness stated that although he had *salamed,* his *salam* was not noticed, and he was made to kiss the shoes of the officer in question.

Other kinds of atrocities have also been reported by the committee. Butter was regularly collected for the troops without any kind of payment to the supplier. The climax of inhuman behaviour reached a point when the collection of butter was stopped, and one rupee, which at that time had much value for a common Indian, per house was realized for the expenses of the army. 'The witness adds that when the money thus collected was exhausted, more was collected. The same witness says that, in addition, 67,000 rupees were collected as indemnity from Wazirabad. He was himself a municipal commissioner, and he had to do his share of collecting in his own ward.'

As in Gujranwala, the curfew order was imposed in Wazirabad also and school children were compelled to attend roll call and salute the Union Jack thrice a day. They were also put to great trouble, specially by walking a long distance in the noon day sun. Besides, a number of *charpais* were taken away from the people for the sue of the military personnel. They had neither been paid for, nor returned. The committee remarked, 'The trials of persons arrested here seem to have been more farcical than elsewhere...All the citizens were sent for by beat of drum to the police station. Minors and *Badmashes* were considered as informers. Any body, against whom the police wanted to get up a case, as brought before the boys where were tutored to give evidence and thus the poor men were entangled. The same boys appeared before the Commission as witnesses; and it was on their evidence alone that the people were punished.'

Next on the agenda of the committee was Nizamabad, a small village, situated at a distance of one mile from Wazirabad, where people

were put to much difficulty without any kind of their participation in the anti-British agitation in a big way. 'There is no doubt that some of men....joined the crowd that burnt Mr. Bailey's house, but the punishment meted out to the poor villagers was out of all proportion to the crime of a few of them.' A special train loaded with British army personnel was despatched from Lahore which stopped exactly before the village. The soldiers surrounded the village, looted the local shops, even took out flour, *ghee,* molasses and made the villagers carry these things to the train. 'For nearly a fortnight the people were made to attend the police station and had to sit in the sun from 7 in the morning till 8 in the evening. The people had to close their workshops.'

Similarly at Akalgarh, a Railway Station beyond Wazirabad and with a population of about 4,000 persons, *hartal* was observed and public meetings were held on 14th and 15th April 1919 as a mark of sympathy for those who suffered immensely in the tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh. Then followed, as at Gujranwala and Wazirabad, the arrests of the prominent persons of the town. A batch of thirty accused was tried, twenty of whom were acquitted. 'The intimidation of witnesses, the corruption that went on during nearly two months and the terrorism that reigned at Akalgarh are all set forth in the statements furnished to us, with a wealth of detail enough to carry conviction.

Ramnagar, a small town situated about five miles from Akalgarh on the banks of the river Chenab, was also the target of martial law administration. The committee reported, 'Yet the people of Ramnagar were, all the same, not only made to labour under a calcumny, but the best of them were made to suffer heavily through a prosecution wantonly undertaken, supported by manufactured evidence led in a trial in which the cannons guiding ordinary trials were set aside.'

The committee felt that Akalgarh and Ramnagar were made to suffer insult, humiliation, loss of personal liberty, loss of money and terrible anxiety, simply because the Martial Law administrator of the region, Colonel O'Brien was bent on 'teaching a severe lesson to the people who had for the first time in their lives begun to realise national consciousness and to interest themselves in public affairs. The tyranny was aggravated by reason of the presence of an utterly unscrupulous local official, Malik Sahib Khan, whose name figures prominently in the statements collected by us regarding these villages.'[28]

At Hafizabad[29] the 'indignities...during the confinement, mostly wrongful, to which cultured or well-brought up men had been subjected, betray the degradation to which the officials had made in their desire to suppress agitation.'

At Chuharkana which was an important market-place and a Railway Station, the *hartal* was observed on the 12th April 1919. There was no incident worth its significance up to 14th April. By the 15th, however, people felt much agitated on account of the atrocities on innocent people by the British authorities in Amritsar and Lahore. Some persons, living at Mandi, and others from the villages proceeded to the Railway Station, and in broad day-light took implements from the railway gang, damaged the line and burnt the station.[30] At this, there was an indiscriminate shooting with machine guns by the military personnel who arrived there soon after. In fact, they fired with the machine gun at the men who were leaving out of terror. Three persons fell down wounded by the machine gun fire.[31] The Sub-Divisional Officer, Lala Sri Ram Sud, who made himself principally responsible for the firing, was cornered by Sir Chimanlal.

Question : Therefore, without any further enquiry, you began to fire?

Answer : Yes, we determined to open fire.

Question : Your idea was that you wanted to strike terror?

Answer : Well, if necessary. And we found it necessary.

Question : And after that firing, you proceeded further to station?

Answer : Yes.

Question : What do you mean by moving? They were not committing any mischief?

Answer : No, not at that time. People were coming out and going into the village.

Question : You do not know what their object was in coming out and going into village ?

Answer ; Well, their object was to attack the armoured train.

Question : From a distance, how did you know that they were collecting to attack the armoured train?

Answer : Unfortunately, I cannot illuminate things which are in my brain.

Question : Pardon me, Lala, we are dealing with what materials you then had and what you saw then. I want to know, when you refer to their movements, what was the actual movement? Will you kindly tell me?

Answer : I said, they were coming and going and I fancy they were collecting.

Question : With what object you cannot say?

Answer : They were collecting for some sinister purpose.

Question : From the fact that you saw some people were going to the village and certain people going out, you concluded that were collecting with home sinister object?

The committee severely criticised the action of the Sub-Divisional Officer which was hasty, premature, and indiscriminate due to panic or over-zeal. 'To strike terror was no part of the officers' business. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness, not a vindication of justice but a perpetration of injustice. A guilty conscience alone resorts to terrorism. We admit that the incendiarism, the looting and the wire cutting were all bad, unwarranted and disgraceful, and the culprits deserved condign punishment. But nothing that the people did could possibly justify the random firing that was resorted to and that resulted in the loss of innocent lives and permanent injury to several innocent people, and the other barbarous measures that were taken in order to terrorise a whole people.'[32]

In Lyallpur, there was complete and spontaneous *hartal* on 6th April. Wires were cut near Lyallpur, but there was not connection between the wire-cutting and the *hartal* or any person in Lyallpur. Bundles of *bhusa* (chaff) stacked at the station were burnt. This was considered to be the work of incendiaries. Innocent people were arrested and put to lot of trouble and subjected to insulting behaviour. Although a very exhaustive police enquiry was made, no trace of anything bearing on the during of the *bhusa* came out. The police enquiry failed to connect the burning of this *bhusa* with the act of any incendiary or with any riot or rioters. There were some approvers in the Lyallpur cases, who were associates of and in the secrets of those who were convicted in the Lyallpur disorders. None of these, however, had any information to given in regard to the burning of the *bhusa* which did not seem to have part of the plans of their associates.

Ram Dass Chhokra, Barrister-at-Law reported that for the offence of reading a paper on *Satyagraha,* he was interned within the municipal limits of Lyallpur and this internment lasted till the abrogation of Martial Law. He saw the Deputy Commissioner after these orders had been passed against him and asked him why he was being prosecuted. The Deputy Commissioner replied that he had not been receiving good reports about him. He asked the District Magistrate, 'Will you kindly tell me specifically what it is that you have against me.' On this he simply promised to look up police papers. 'I went to him twice after this, but each time I was informed that he had not time to do so. And I do not know till now the reasons for the strange action of the authorities.'[33]

The committee severely criticised the action, behaviour, and dealings of officials in Lyallpur. 'The pressure put upon witnesses to give false evidence was practically of the same character, as described elsewhere. A remarkable expression was made use of by an officer to a witness who was expected to given evidence in particular, *"Ya takht to, ya takhta milega,"* meaning, 'choose between the throne and the gallows.' If the witness gave evidence as desired, he was to be free; if he did not, imprisonment was to be his lot.'

In Gujarat[34] an attempted hartal for the 6th April 1919 was prevented by the efforts of a local businessman, Lala Ram Chand Tandon who was an influential person, being the president of the Sanatan Dharam Sabha. But after a week *i.e.,* on the 13th April some college students from Lahore and belonging to Gujarat, had gone to Wazirabad for the *Baisakhi* festival, returned to the town by the late night train about 11 p.m. They had formed themselves into a kind of procession and entered the town, raising slogans against the Rowlatt Act and the British government. Next morning they spread the news of the atrocities in Lahore and other places in the Punjab, and succeeded in inducing the shopkeepers to close their shops. To control the situation and maintain law and order, the District Magistrate, William son, in a meeting with the local municipal commissioners and other prominent citizens asked them to keep watch in their respective wards and also see that there was no untoward incident in their areas. On the 15th, some students alongwith a few other persons proceeded to the Mission School and asked the Head Master to close it. The latter, however, refused to do so and also caned some of the students who showed any kind of sympathy with the outsiders. Thereupon, the students stoned at

the windows of the school and smashed some panes. After this, as the small procession proceeded, they did the same kind damage at the Railway Station where they smashed a few window panes and a few articles of wooden furniture. They, however, dispersed after they were fired upon. But there was not a single casualty.

They committee remarked that there was nothing beyond the above-mentioned incidents. In fact, no responsible public man had taken part in the promotion of the *hartal* or in what followed soon after. It is interesting to note that the District Magistrate knew nothing about the Martial Law. He did not want it, and when he received a telegram announcing the promulgation of Martial Law in Gujrat district, he was surprised to know such a decision of the Punjab government. 'He questioned whether it could be Gujarat, in the Punjab at all. He thought it must be Gujarat in the Bombay Presidency. But he was mistaken, and Gujrat which had done nothing to deserve it, was handed over to the military and remained under their sway till Martial Law was done away with in June.'[35]

The authorities administered the Martial Law in an illegal, in-human persons of the town. Har Gopal, a local barrister and others were arrested and were detained in jail for a long time. Lala Ram Chand Tandon who had assisted the British authorities during the First World War and who held government *Sanads* for various acts, was also harassed. Houses of respectable persons were searched without showing any kind of Court notice to the occupants. A punitive police had been imposed upon Gujrat without any justification whatsoever. A tax of Rs. 42,000 had been fixed and was to be exacted in six installments.[36] Martial Law was also proclaimed at Jalalpur Jatan[37] and Malakwal.[38] The committee reported that there was no *hartal* on 6th of April. 'On the 15th, however, what may be termed a sympathetic *hartal* took place. There was no damage done by the crows. A procession was formed in which all participated. A telegraphic wire was cut by some one during the night of the 15th or 16th.' As a result of this small incident, martial law was duly proclaimed in this village. Respectable persons of the village were arrested and the number rose to seventeen. Of these, ten were discharged, one was released without being brought up before the Court and the remaining six were sentenced to a variety of terms of imprisonment by the Martial Law authorities. Besides, school going students were harassed and persecuted. Some of them had to attend the

police station three times a day. An indemnity of Rs. 12,000 was imposed on this village without any kind of legal justification.[39]

At Malakwal, on the 17th April, some persons, probably railway labourers had damaged a rail and thus had endangered the lives of railway passengers. 'A train was, as a matter of fact, derailed, but happily no damage was done.' At this incident, Malakwal, like others towns and villages of the Punjab was the victim of the atrocities of Martial Law. The committee reported that more than forty persons were arrested, including young students and about twenty of the railway clerical staff. 'Of these, eight were acquitted, and over fifteen released with out ever being brought to trial, though they were detained for a long time in custody. Respectable men were compelled to pull *pankhas* for the officers. They were also called upon to clean streets and do other sanitary work. School children were compelled to appear three times a day to salute the Union Jack, the railway clerical staff was dismissed, although acquitted. Some of these were servants, who had an unbroken record of over thirty years' service.'[40]

The committee concluded thus: 'We have now dealt with the five districts in which Martial Law was proclaimed...We desire to state that we have endeavoured to keep ourselves to the facts before us, and not based our conclusions on anything outside the evidence, printed separately, supplemented by the evidence given before Lord Hunter's Committee and the record of the Martial Law Tribunals.

'But we feel that it is not possible to ignore acts of atrocious injustice on a wholesale scale by responsible officers, as it would not be possible, no matter how bright the future might be, to ignore the criminal acts of the people. In our opinion, it is more necessary now than ever before that the official wrong should be purged, as well as the people's. The task of working the reforms and making India realise her goal in the quickest time possible would be well nigh impossible, if both the people and the officials did not approach it with clean hands and clean minds. If, therefore, we recommend that officials who have erred should be brought to justice, we do so, not in vindictive spirit, but in order that the administration of the country may become purified of corruption and injustice. Whilst, therefore, we believe that the mob excesses in Amritsar and elsewhere were wrong and deserving of condemnation, we are, equally sure that the popular misdeeds have been more than punished by the action of the authorities.

'We believe that had Mr. Gandhi not been arrested whilst he was on his way to Delhi and the Punjab, and had Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal not been arrested and deported, innocent English lives would have been saved, and valuable property, including Christian Churches, not destroyed. These two acts of the Punjab Government were uncalled for, and served like matches applied to material rendered inflammable by pervious processes.

'...It is impossible, however, to ignore or slur over the inaction, if not the active participation, of the Central Government in the official action. His Excellency the Viceroy never took the trouble of examining the people's case. He ignored telegrams and letters from individuals and public bodies. He endorsed the action of the Punjab Government without inquiry....He never went to the Punjab to make a personal inquiry, even after the concurrences....He expressed such a callous indifference to popular feelings and destroyed such criminal want of imagination, that he would not postpone the death sentences pronounced by the Martial Law Tribunals, except after he was forced to do so by the Secretary of State for India....Whilst, therefore, we do not think His Excellency was wilfully neglectful of the interests of those who were entrusted to his charge by His Majesty, we regret to say that His Excellency Lord Chemsford proved himself incapable of holding the high office to which he was called, and we are of opinion that His Excellency should be recalled.'[41]

Thus the committee was quite clear in its findings that the people of the Punjab were much incensed against the administration of Michael O'Dwyer mainly because of his known contempt and distrust of the educated closes and also by his cruel and compulsory methods adopted during the course of the First World War and by his policy of suppression of public opinion by gagging the local press and thus shutting out all nationalist newspapers from outside the Punjab.

The Rowlatt agitation had greatly disturbed the public mind and had shaken public confidence in the goodwill of the government. The frequent operation of the Defence of India Act by the administration of Michael O'Dwyer contributed much for the people to lose their faith and confidence in the government.

While the *satyagraha* movement and the *hartal* at various places vitalised the people into activity, they saved it from 'more violent tendencies and passions of the people. The Rowlatt agitation was not conceived in an anti-British spirit and there was no conspiracy to overthrow the government in the Punjab.

The arrest of a leader of all-India stature like Mahatma Gandhi and deportations of Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal were unjustifiable and were the 'only direct cause of hysterical popular excitement.'

Whereas the mob excesses at various places in the Punjab were regretted, criticised and condemned, the introduction of Martial Law and the measures undertaken were labelled as cruel, oppressive and in utter disregard of the feelings of the people affected by them.

'The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men, including children, and unparalled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration...The crawling order and other fancy punishments were unworthy of a civilised administration, and were symptomatic of the moral degradation of their inventors.

The Martial Law tribunals and the summary courts were the engines of harassment for the innocent and, in many cases, persons of social status. They 'resulted in abortion of justice on a wide scale, and under the name of justice caused moral and material sufferings to hundreds of men and women.' Besides the imposition of indemnity and of punitive police at various places was 'an uncalled for, unjust and added injury.'

The committee, in the end, strongly recommended for the repeal of the Rowlatt Act; for relieving Michael O'Dwyer of any responsible office under the Crown; for relieving General Dyer, Colonel Johnson, Colonel O'Brien, Bosworth Smith, Rai Sahib Sri Ram Sud and Malik Sahib Khan of any position of responsibility under the Crown; for local inquiry into corrupt practices of the minor officials; for the recall of the Viceroy; for the refund of the fines collected from people who were convicted by the special tribunals and summary courts and for removal of punitive police.

The report of the committee did not escape notice of the press. Whereas the *Times of India*[42] emphasised the exparte character of the report based necessarily on incomplete and not well-sifted data, the *Bombay Chronicle*[43] stated thus: 'It has been written in such a spirit of detachment, studied moderation, sense of truth and responsibility that the conclusions of the report ought to command the universal acceptance not only of Indians but of all Englishmen also.'

REFERENCES

1. They are known as Commissioners.
2. Motilal Nehru resigned as Commissioner on his appointment as President of Indian National Congress in 1919. M.R. Jayakar replaced Fazlul Haq as the latter was called away on important business.
3. M.K. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 527.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 528.
5. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, New Delhi, 1932, p. 43.
6. Report of the Congress, pp. 47 ff.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, 61.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 69 ff.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-1.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
16. Another form of torture invented by Col. Johnson was to paste his notices on the houses of those whom he considered to be 'evilly disposed persons. The owner was made responsible for any damage done, including even the dirtying of these notices.'
17. Report of the Congress, pp. 84 ff.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-8.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
20. The general dislike that M. O' Dwyer felt towards the deponent was intensified in that the deponent had been appointed a member of the Congress deputation, and was to proceed to England at the end of April 1919, and that he had also been elected to preside at the Punjab Provincial Conference which was to be held at Jullundur on 18-19 April 1919.
21. Report of the Congress, pp. 91-2.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-4.
23. Report of the Congress, pp. 98-100.
24. A notice was issued under Martial Law Rule No. 2 by the Officer Commanding, Gujranwala. 'As we have come to know that some shopkeepers who live within the Municipal limits of Gujranwala, shut up

their shops when the army and police go to them to purchase articles or that they refuse to sell the articles to the army or the police soldiers for a reasonable price. Therefore the undermentioned orders are issued that after the publication of this Notice, those shopkeepers who would be found acting mentioned above, would be arrested, and they would be found acting mentioned above, would be arrested, and they would be liable to be punished by flogging.'

25. Rev. Bailey's house stood on an isolated piece of ground about two miles from Wazirabad.
26. Report of the Congress, pp. 111-12.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 117-19.
29. It is situated at distance of 15 miles from Akalgarh on the Wazirabad Lyallpur railway line and was a fairly large trade centre. Its population in 1919 was about 5,000 persons.
30. Report of the Congress, pp. 150-51.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-36.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
34. Gujrat an historic place for the battle of Gujrat during the Sikh wars. It is a Railway Station beyond Wazirabad, on the main line and nine miles from it. It had a population of nearly 20,000.
35. Report of the Congress, pp. 150-51.
36. One-fourth of this amount has been exacted from Lala Ram Chand Tandon and one-fourth from some pleaders.
37. It is a small village in Gujrat district, about eight miles from Gujrat. It was an important weaving centre.
38. It is an important railway junction and is reached from Lala Muṣa which is one the main line and which is over ten miles from Gujrat. It had a population of 3,000.
39. Report of the Congress, p. 152.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-53.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57.
42. *Times of India*, 26 March 1920.
43. *Bombay Chronicle*, 26 March 1920.

6

Amritsar Congress, 1919

The decision to hold the thirty-fourth session of the Indian National Congress at Amritsar was deeply attached with the touching sentiments generated by the tragic incident in the Jallianwala Bagh a few months earlier. The city, an historic one on numerous counts, had gained much publicity after April 1919 when the tragic happenings were featured in the press and in numerous political and social meetings at several places in the Punjab and elsewhere. The election of a seasoned, reputed and affluent lawyer of Allahabad and a prominent leader of the Congress as president was a befiting tribute to Pandit Motilal Nehru. Both Motilal Nehru and young Jawaharlal Nehru were critical of the great tragedy that had taken the lives of hundreds of innocent persons in the *Bagh*.

Undoubtedly the session was well-attended. There were 7,031 delegates who assembled on 27th December, 1919 at the *pandal* in the Aitchison Park, opposite the railway lines, in Amritsar. The prominent leaders who attended this Congress, were Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, C.R. Das, Annie Besant, M.A.. Jinnah, Mr. and Mrs. Hasan Imam, Raja of Mahmudabad, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dinshaw Petit, Srinivasa Sastri, Kasturiranga Iyengar, Vijiaraghavachariar, Bepin Chandra Pal, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew, Dr. Satyapal, Lal Harkishenlal, and last but not the least Pandit Rambhaj Dutt Chaudhri. The proceedings began after the president's arrival with a welcome song sung by some ladies led by Mrs. Sarladevi Chaudhrani.[1]

The chairman of the reception committee, Swami Shraddhananda, mentioned about effects of the tragic events that had happened in some areas of the province. 'But where selfishness so reigns supreme on all sides how could unselfishness shine forth. Orderliness gave place to disorder, and peace made room from a reign of terror. Every one was simply thunder struck on getting news of the cruel bloodshed on the

sacred day of the Baisakha Sankranti. Martial Law, however, prevailed and there was quiet—the quiet of cremation ground and the grave yard—the silence of death'.[2]

The promulgation of Martial Law was also discussed by the chairman. 'The doses of Martial Law, which Lt. Col. Frank Johnson and General Dyer administered to the Punjab have, instead of casting it 50 years behind, stimulated its political activity so far that now having as if bridged over a number of years it stands abreast of the other more advanced provinces...' In the same breath, he advised the moderates, liberals, extremists, radicals and home-rulers to unite amongst themselves as their goal was common—to achieve self-government for India.[3]

While narrating the tragic incident at Jallianwala Bagh the chairman had a word of praise for Hindu-Muslim unity which had been shown during 1919. 'Its second fruit is the realisation of the sublimity of penance and forbearance. The Martial Law has well-established the value of character and indeed character is the key to true progress. Its third fruit is a clear vindication of the powers of constitutional agitation and forbearance. The Jallianwala Bagh presented the best illustration of forbearance, for both young and old there received the volleys of bullets like showers of flowers.'[4]

In the end he laid emphasis on the development of the scheme of education and deprecated the tendency of making the students as slaves of western thought and culture. 'When that fortunate day comes, you shall have to give up your western methods of eating and drinking and dressing. You shall have to bid adieu once for all to your life of luxury. Then will the scattered parts of this nation unite. Then will a true system of National education evolve, which would be managed entirely by our own men'.[5]

In the opening sentences of his presidential speech, Motilal Nehru mentioned about the 'recent tragic events in the Punjab. He stated, 'Those events furnish many a dark chapter to the history of the past twelve months, but none darker than the great tragedy enacted in the very city of Amritsar in April last.' He called it the 'cruel murder of hundreds of your brothers.'[6] He criticised the British government for its non-fulfilment of the promises it made during the war. Even after the termination of war, there was no hope for attaining self-determination for the country. 'Peace has now come, partially at least, but it has brought little comfort even to the victors. The pledges made

by statesmen have proved but empty words, the principles for which the War was fought have been forgotten and the famous fourteen points are dead and gone.'[7]

Motilal Nehru made a reference about the prevailing situation in various countries of the world. *Vae victis* is still, as of old, the order of the day. Russia, hungering for peace, is allowed no respite and a number of little wars are waging on the continent of Europe. Prussianism has been crushed but it has been reborn in the other countries of the west which have enthroned militarism on high. The fate of Turkey hangs in the balance, and Ireland and Egypt are being made to feel the might of the British Empire. In India, the first fruits of the peace were the Rowlatt Bills and Martial Law. It was not for this that the war was fought, it was not for this that many hundreds of thousands laid down their lives.' He warned that, 'Our rulers have failed to realise that repression and conciliation cannot go hand in hand; that the grace of a gift lies more in the manner of giving than in the thing given.'[8]

Congratulating the people of Amritsar and the Punjab, the president mentioned about their sufferings and sacrifices for the cause of the nation. 'India has suffered much at the hands of an alien and reactionary bureaucracy, but the Punjab has in that respect acquired a most unenviable notoriety'. But repression and terrorism have never yet killed the life of a nation, they increase the disaffection and drive it underground to pursue an unhealthy course breaking out occasionally into crimes of violence...No one can but deplore violence and political crime.' He also traced out the past history of the agitation in the Punjab. 'During the early days of Sir Michael O'Dwyer's rule occurred the *Komagata Maru* incident...On landing in India they found themselves prisoners and, broken down as they were by the consistent ill-treatment they had received at home and abroad, they completely lost their heads and the unfortunate Budge-Budge riot was the result. (This) episode marked the recrudescence of unrest in the Punjab and afforded a pretext to Sir Michael O'Dwyer to ask for more 'effective power'...At last Lord Hardinge was compelled to yield and the Defence of India Act which substantially embodied the provisions of this draft ordinance was hurriedly passed through the Indian Council. How this "essential war measure" has been sued not only in the Punjab but in the other provinces as well to deal with matters wholly unconnected with the war, we all known.'[9]

The Rowlatt legislation was also viewed with severe criticism in the presidential speech. 'The most remarkable feature of the Act in this respect is that no right of appeal is given even when the judges differ, the only consideration shown being that no sentence of death shall be passed if there is such difference of opinion....The negation of law and justice which the Rowlatt Act represents could only be necessary to cover the inability or incompetency of the government to cope with an evil which is by no means confined to India. The only justification pleaded is that the Act is not meant for the innocent and the law-abiding who need have no fear of its application to them. But it is conveniently forgotten that the sole judge of the innocence or guilt of any person, however, high placed he may be is the executive. And who can have faith in the executive if the safeguards imposed by law on them are removed...After what has happened recently in the Punjab, and at different times in other parts of India, let no man ask us to put implicit faith in the reasonableness of government measures and methods...The point is that no executive in the world, however, competent it may be, has any business to usurp the jurisdiction of duly constituted law courts or deprive the people of the protection afforded by them.'[10]

The president mentioned about the 'popular cries in the Punjab which put the main provision so of the Act in a nutshell. 'No *vakil* no appeal, no *daleel'*. He explained, 'To compare the arrest and confinement without trial of a citizen, and numerous other restraints put on his liberty of action and speech, with the governance of a school or a club is, to say the least, adding a gross insult to a serious wrong...The Act is an ugly blot on the Indian statute book and must be removed without delay.'

The launching of *satyagraha* was another significant item in Motilal Nehru's speech. He applauded the trenchant criticism levelled by Mahatma Gandhi in his numerous speeches, statements and writings against the Rowlatt Bills. With his incessant efforts, the masses of India were suddenly awakened and the message of *satyagraha* entered the humblest home. He was quite sure that unless the people adhered to truth and discard fear, they could not get rid of 'slave psychology', the outcome of generations of repression which had been our 'sad inheritance.' 'And violence cannot avail us. This is the special weapon of the west and we cannot hope to win freedom by armed force. But even if we could do so it would be a barren victory, a victory which would degrade and coarsen us and make us less fit to enjoy the freedom

we had so won. We would develop the same vices against which we are contending now in our turn would start the game of repression.'

While elaborating his ideas about the recurrence of *hartal* on 6th April, the Congress President stated, 'There was no civil disobedience of laws in the Punjab. *Satyagraha* flourished more in other parts of the country and yet there was on disturbance there. The *hartals* of the 6th April did not cause any breach of the peace. It was only after two popular leaders of the city had been suddenly deported and Mahatma Gandhi, the most revered Indian of the day, had been arrested, that the passions of the populace broke loose in certain parts of the country. That would have been so even without *satyagraha* or *hartal.* The disturbance were the result of the action of the authorities. They knew full well, in the Punjab at least, that the consequence of their provocative action would lead to trouble and they took measures accordingly.'[11] He had a serious dig on clamping of Martial law in the Punjab which almost cut off this province from the rest of the world. It was difficult to ascertain the happening there and only one-sided accounts were presented by the government. Outsiders were not permitted to enter the 'charmed area', even C.F. Andrews being turned out of the province.

Indeed a major portion of his speech was spent on the earlier happenings at Amritsar; the operation of inhuman treatment meted out to the innocent local population by the British officials. The sudden deportation of Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal was a typical act of the British administrators. Having convinced themselves that there was revolution in the air, that conspiracies were being hatched, that the wonderful calm of the 6th and 9th of April had strange currents underneath, they took the only step which appealed to the mind of a bureaucrat. This kind of action they thought, would greatly upset the people, leading to a serious trouble. Could they crush them with the "ample resources" at their disposal? It did not strike them that the people could be reasoned with or could be conciliated. Nor did they think of having recourse to the ordinary law courts of the country. They do not believe in the intricacies or the delays of the law. They believe in making themselves the judges and meting out swift and stern justice to their opponents'.

Besides, he severely criticised the violent action of the British government in Jallianwala Bagh. 'But saddest most revealing of all was the great tragedy which occurred here on the Baisakhi day. No Indian and no true Englishman can hear the story of the *Khuni Bagh,* as it is now aptly called, without a sickening feeling of horror....What words,

fellow delegates, can I use to express your feelings, and mine whose kith and kin were mercilessly shot down by the hundred in cold blood? The facts of this incident were before you, they have largely been admitted by the authorities....General Dyer, the author of the deed, has almost boasted of his achievement. He has sought to justify it...The defenders of law and order had won a great victory, they had crushed the great rebellion'.[12]

Talking about the crawling orders in Amritsar, cruelties and atrocities of British officials on innocent people in Lahore, Gujranwala, Kasur and other places, he explained, 'In Gujranwala, as you are all aware...act of bombing from aeroplanes was practised, a bomb being actually dropped on a school boarding-house full of boys. The manner in which bombs were dropped may be gathered from Lt. Dodkin's statement. He says, 'I saw twenty or thirty people in a field talking to one another and dropped bombs on them. I did not know who they were, whether they had assembled for an unlawful purpose, but I bombed as my orders were to disperse crowds.'[13] In Kasur, Captain Devoton evolved a "fancy and novel" punishments for the people and sought to teach them how to observe the ancient customs of India by touching the ground with their foreheads. He also had men stripped and flogged in the presence of prostitutes. 'His brother officer Lt. Col. Macrae meanwhile amused himself by having school boys flogged in public in order to set an example to all evils-doers. The bigger boys were picked out at random, perhaps they could bear the whipping better. They were not guilty of any offence. "It was their misfortune"...All the male inhabitants, boys and men, ten thousand in number, had to present themselves, for the identification parade. The men arrested, 150 in number, were put in a cage placed on the station platform, and a public gallows was errected, entirely at the instance of the Punjab Government, before any one was tried or condemned to death; so Col. Macrae informs us.'[14]

The Hindu-Muslim unity was another significant aspect of the presidential speech. Besides the attempt to terrorize the people, the Punjab officials aimed a blow at the most valuable asset of Indian political life, the union between Hindus and Muslims. The president mentioned the pathetic scenes of fraternization between the two communities which took place during the disturbances in Delhi, Lahore and other places accompanied with shouts of *Hindu Muslman ki jai.* these expressions of friendliness and fellowship in a common trouble

were treated by the Punjab officials as heinous crimes amounting to open rebellion and waging a war against the king. 'One of the most shameful acts of the Martial Law authorities was to ridicule the Hindu-Muslim entente publicly in various ways. The admission of Hindus to the Mohammedan mosques and of Mohammedan to the Hindu temples, the drinking of water or *sherbet* from out of the same glass by Hindus and Mohammedan were unmistakable signs of a far deeper union of the two than could be looked upon with equanimity by those who were interested in keeping them apart. And an attempt was made under official inspiration during the closing days of Martial Law to found separate political associations or *Sabhas* for Hindus, Mohammedan and Sikhs. I do not know what progress has been made in this direction but I trust that my fellow countrymen of all communities will refrain from swallowing this fatal bait.'[15]

The president also made a comprehensive reference to the necessity of Martial Law, the cases during the operation of this law and the official responsibilities, in this regard, of Michael O'Dwyer and Lord Chelmsford. He stated, '...I think I am fully within may rights in pointing out that the question is not so much whether there was necessity for the application of Martial Law at any time as whether it was necessary when it was actually applied. It may be that Martial Law could be justified if it had been introduced at the time when the disturbances were actually going on, but it is an admitted fact that it was not so applied. What was done was to call on the military to help the civil administration, which is well within the discretion of every magistrate under our Criminal Law, but is very different from Martial Law.

'Whatever, the finding of your Commissioners and Lord Hunter's Committee as to the initial necessity of Martial Law may be, there is not the slightest doubt, on the admissions made by the official witnesses before Lord Hunter's Committee that there was absolutely no justification for keeping it in force for the unconsciousable length of time during which its horrors continued to be perpetrated. Admittedly, it was not required to maintain law and order and the only justification pleaded, besides the old story of the dangers arising from the proximity of the frontier, is that it enabled the offenders to be brought to speedy justice.'[16].

Indeed the Martial Law commissions, summary and area courts, the President stated, had caused the greatest misery to the people. Many lay in jails; 108 persons were sentenced to death and the aggregate

sentences of imprisonment amounted to the stupendous total of 7,371 years and 5 months (allowing 20 years for a sentence of transpiration for life). 'Many of these sentences have been largely reduced by the present Lieutenant-Governor. Clemency has been shown where justice was needed. Injustice cannot be tempered with mercy. Sir Edward Maclagan is a kindly gentleman who has tried to mitigate the rigours of his predecessors' regime but he has not had the courage or the wisdom to break it through the evil traditions he has inherited.'[17]

The responsibility for this type of administration, Motilal Nehru admitted, originated, without any doubt, from working of the mind of Michael O'Dwyer who had endeavoured to show and strove to make the Punjab a kind of Ulster in relation to the rest of India. 'To him there was little difference between a constitutional agitator and an anarchist. For both he had the same remedy, repression. But the remedy failed him and increased the disease. and then he played his master card and brought in Martial Law to kill once for all the breed that agitates. He had failed again in his endeavour, but this policy has resulted in death for many and in utmost misery for thousands. For that he is fully responsible. He is responsible for the actions of General Dyer and military colleagues in Amritsar; he is also responsible for the doings of his subordinates in the other districts under Martial Law.[18] He also blamed Lord Chelmsford who did not discharge his official duty 'faithfully and adequately'. He questioned with sarcasm" : He must have known or ought to have known, what was happening in the punJab. The Congress Committee repeatedly drew his attention to it...Has he shown us any sympathy? Has he even been into the heart of the province to acquaint himself by personal enquiry on the spot concerning the tragedies which have taken place? We have not even heard that his heart has bled for Amritsar...Has he faithfully and adequately discharged his duty to his King and to his fellow countrymen by his persistent refusal to listen or to interfere, by his aloofness and by his absence from the science of these happenings, when hundreds of His Majesty's subjects were done to death by the military and thousands put to shameful indignity.'[19]

The process of constitutional development in India was also elaborated by him. The Government of India Act, he stated, was not based on the wishes of the people of India and its provision fell short of the minimum demands made by the Indian National Congress. It gave the people some power, but it did not give them free citizenship or the power to check the misuse of the executive of the functions of law and

order. It thus ignored the insistent demand of the country for a Declaration of Rights. In fact, this demand was clearly formulated by the special Congress in Bombay, and it was reiterated in Delhi in 1918. Subsequent events had but emphasised the necessity for it. No constitution could meet our needs unless it was accompanied with a guarantee and a clear declaration of our elementary rights which had been so ruthlessly violated in the Punjab. 'No Indian can be blind to the fact that the protection of our fundamental civic liberties is a matter of the most urgent consequence. No statesman can shut his eyes to the supreme moral necessity of securing the faith of the Indian people in the inviolability of their rights of citizenship...without these rights, as some of the most distinguished publicists in England have stated recently in a manifesto,. "British freedom is a mockery." It is obvious that all these traditional rights have been set at nought in India by the combined operation of the Indian D.O.R.A., the numerous repressive measures on our statute book and the cult of Martial Law.'[20]

Motilal Nehru touched upon the question of Khilafat which he stated was one of the significant issues of the day. He made it clear by saying that 'The entry of Turkey in the war was a most momentous events from the Indian Muslims' point of view. They felt no inconsiderable misgivings about their attitude when they saw that an issue had arisen, which seemed to involve a conflict between their loyalty to their King and country and duty to the religious had of the Islamic world. But these doubts were happily short-lived and the Indian Mohammedans cheerfully cast in their lot with the British Empire when the memorable announcement of the 2nd November, 1914, was made by Lord Hardinge, securing to the Mohammedans complete immunity from any interference with their religious feelings. This announcement was followed by similar assurances from other British statesmen. Mr. Lloyd George in his famous speech of the 50th January, 1914, said: 'Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital or of the rich and renowed lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race."

'Apart from the promises and pledges given to His Majesty's Muslim subjects they have the right to demand the application of the principle of self-determination to the component parts of the Turkish Empire in the same way as it has been applied to Poland and the Yugoslavia. What reason is therefor a different treatment of Mesopotamia and Syria, where the population is almost entirely Muslim

in faith, or of Palestine and Armenia, where Muslims are numerous more than the followers of any other religion?

'As to who is the rightful Khalifat-ul-Islam, it is unnecessary for me to enter into historical or religious considerations. Lord Robert Cecil has admitted in the House of Commons that "His Majesty's Government have never departed from the attitude that the question of Khilafat is one for Muslim opinion alone to decide." Muslim opinion has now decided it, in a manner which leaves no possible doubt, in favour of the Sultan of Turkey. With Arabia independent, with foreign powers governing Mesopotamia, Syria and Armenia in the guise of mandatories, with Palestine restored to the Jews, with the Greeks securely lodged in Smyma and the Hinterland, with Constantinople fat-ul-Islam? Fellow-delegates, it is a serious question demanding your most earnest attention.'

Besides *Swadeshi,* sufferings of B.G. Horniman and ultimate goal of the Indian National Congress were stated in clear terms.

'From matters which require political action I come to that which in its one aspect requires no political action I come to that which in its one aspect requires no political or legal action, yet which is one that is fraught with the greatest consequences for good. If refer to *Swadeshi.* Mr. Gandhi has made this question his own. He would, if he could, revive the ancient industry of hand-spinning and make the country self-supporting. Modern economists may doubt the success of the scheme in this age of waste and if it becomes popular, it bids fair to solve the problem of finding a subsidiary occupation to agriculture. Seventy-three per cent, of our population is agricultural. No agricultural population can exist without supplementary industry. If our women were to take to hand-spinning and if hand-weaving became fashionable as before, without a big organisation and without a large outlay of money, we cannot only produce sufficient cloth for our wants but provide the peasantry with auxiliary industry. I commend the scheme to the attention of the delegates.

'But, by your leave, I shall say a few words about a friend of India who has suffered because of the love he bore our country. This Congress needs no words of mine to inform it of the many and varied services which Mr. B.G. Horniman has rendered to our cause. We are a grateful nation and our friends are not so many that we can afford to forget or lose any of them. Mr. B.G. Horniman, as you are aware, was removed

from a bed of sickness and without any respite made to leave the country. That is the way of the bureaucracy. Charges of a gross nature have been made against him in the House of Commons and elsewhere. They have been contradicted and proved to be false but there has been no withdrawal of them, nor has Mr. Horniman been permitted to return. In England he is devoting himself to our cause, but that is poor consolation for us, who miss his wise counsel and his sturdy independence.'

'But what is our ultimate goal? We want freedom of thought, freedom of action, freedom to fashion our own destiny and build up an India-suited to the genius of her people. We do not wish to make of India a cheap and slavish limitation of west. We have so far sought to liberalise our government on the western model. Whether that will satisfy us in the future I cannot say. But let us bear in mind that western democracy has not proved a panacea for all ills; it has not yet solved the problems which surround us. Europe is torn as under by the conflict between labour and capital, and the proletariat is raising its head against the rule of the classes. It may be that when we get the power to mould our institutions, we shall evolve a system of government, which will blend all that is best in the east and the west. Meanwhile, let us beware of the errors of the west and at the same time cast out the evil customs and traditions which have clung to us. We must aim at an India where all are free and have the fullest opportunities of development; where women have ceased to be in bondage, and the rigours of the caste system have disappeared; where there are no privileged classes or communities; where education is free and open to all; where the capitalist and landlord do not oppress the labourers and the ryot' where labour is respected and well paid, and poverty, the night-mare of the present generation, is a thing of the past. Life will then be worth living in this country, it will be inspired by joy and hope, and the terrible misery we see around us will become a bad dream which has faded away from our memory, on our awakening to welcome the morning sun.

'But that day is yet distant. We have still a difficult path, full of obstacles and pitfalls before us. Let us march ahead with truth for our guide and courage our watchword and before long we shall reach the promised land.

'Coming to the provisions of the new Act, we find that a considerable part of this measure is in the nature of a blank cheque. The filling up of this cheque is left to the Executive Government of India, subject to the supervision of the Secretary of State. This process

may make or mar, whatever, benefits are intended to be conferred by the very large number of proposals which are subject to the extensive rule-making powers provided under the Act. There are yet further commissions or committees to come, and further investigations to be made in order to settle details. It is on the completion of this work that the Act will by fully put in operation.'

C.R. Das sponsored a resolution on the reform of the self-government and it was presented in three parts. Although seconded by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the amendments were shot by prominent leaders like Gandhi, Jinnah, Mrs. Besant, B.C. Pal and Mohammed Ali.

The original resolution was as follows:

1. That this congress reiterates its declaration of last year that India is fit for full responsible government and repudiates all assumptions and assertions to the contrary wherever made.
2. That this Congress adheres to the resolutions passed at the Delhi Congress regarding constitutional reforms and is of opinion that the Reforms Act is inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing.
3. That this Congress further urges that Parliament should take early steps to establish full responsible government in India in accordance with the principle of self-determination.

While seconding the resolution Tilak observed, "We are asked to thank Mr. Montagu. I have no objection to thank any body if you wish. But I am not very particular about thanking. We are in the habit of thanking for every little thing. This amendment will be moved and it will be for you to decide whether it is in strict consonance with the principle I have enunciated'.

Gandhi also proposed that the word 'disappointing' may be omitted from Clause 2 of the resolution. In support of his resolution, he spelt out his sentiments thus....Throughout my life, I have understood the spirit of democracy. I have yielded to no one in both these things, but throughout my life, I have also found that there come occasions in a man's life, if he wants to regulate his life according to the voice of his own conscience, according to the immutable laws of God as he understands them, when he must grasp and embrace his brother parting with him as a dearest friend. My amendment expresses, in my opinion, in more graceful language, what the original clause says.

'I do believe with Tilak Maharaj Mr. Das and all the other friends that we are fit for responsible government....Their position again was, why should we thank a servant of ours. After all, who is Mr. Montague? He is our servant. If he has done a little bit of his duty, why do we want to thank him? If is an attitude you may sympathies with. But I say to this great audience that it is not an attitude which is worthy of ourselves. It is the heart of your hearts you can say that Mr. Montagu, throughout his career as Secretary of State for India, has done one thing, *viz.,* he has overborne the opposition led by Lord Sydenham against this Bill and he has resisted all encroachments upon its liberal provisions, then I say extend to that extent the hand of fellowship to Mr. Montague. He deserves our thanks. This is all my amendment means.'

Jinnah seconded Gandhi's amendment and observed thus. 'Now Lokamanya Tilak comes on this platform and has told you that we want to use the Act, make the fullest use of it, we will get into the Legislative Councils. We will accept Ministership, in fact we shall make the fullest possible use of it, but may I know, in the name of Heaven, in the name of everything that is sacred, why does not the Congress say so in its resolution and give a true lead to thousands who are outside waiting to know your opinion? I have no hesitation in saying on this platform that there is a school in this country whose intention is to obstruct and not to work the Reforms. I make bold to say that. If you are intending to co-operate, if you wish to take up Ministership, if the Act which places such opportunities and advantages in your way is worked properly, then I say it will be impossible to resist inquiry being held earlier. I ask you this question, do you object to work the Reforms so as to make the establishment of full Responsible Government as early as possible...Let this Indian National Congress rise to that height and express its thanks for what he has done. I have no doubt in my mind that Mr. Montagu has laboured, I tell you from my own personal knowledge, as no other Englishman has laboured for the Reform of India.'

Mrs. Besant proposed another amendment and opined thus. 'That this Congress welcomes the Reform Act as opening the gateway of freedom to the Indian Nation and as giving her power to walk on her own feet along the road to Responsible Government, thus forming the first substantial stage on that road, and it earnestly begs the people to take the utmost advantage of its provisions so as to reach the goal in the shortest possible time. It places on record its gratitude to Mr. Montagu and Lord Sinha for their strenuous work against greatest difficulties both in India and Great Britain.'

B.C. Pal added the following clause to the original motion. 'This Congress in the meanwhile recommends that the provisions of the Reform Act be used as far as possible with a view to secure full Responsible Government at an early date and it desires to record its thanks to Mr. Montagu for his labours in connection with the Reforms.'

Mohammed Ali supported Pal's amendment in an Urdu speech.

Other speechs followed more or less on the same lines and ultimately a stage was reached when the leading men put their heads together and a compromise resolution was arrived at on the main proposition on the following terms:

The first-three clauses would remain unaltered but the fourth clause would be, "pending such introduction this Congress trusts that, so far as may be possible, the people will so work the Reforms as to secure an earlier establishment of full Responsible Government and this Congress offers thanks to the Rt. Hon'ble E.S. Montagu for his labours in connection with the Reforms." This was accepted as a compromise by all except Mrs. Besant. Her amendment was therefore put to the vote and was declared lost. The compromise resolution was thereafter put to the vote, Das making a speech clearly stating that co-operation when necessary to advance our cause will be offered but obstruction also when that is necessary for the advancement of our cause. "We are not opposed," he said, "to co-operation if co-operation helps us to attain our ends. We are not opposed to obstruction, plain downright obstruction, when that helps to attain our political goal. The three propositions which I moved this morning remain just as they are with word "disappointing" at the end of the second clause. Another clause is added which includes thanks to Mr. Montagu." The compromise resolution was then put to the vote and carried. Thus ended the keen conflict between the views of Das and Tilak, inclusive of "obstruction when necessary", and Gandhi's and Jinnah's, that the reforms were to be used for the purpose of obtaining responsible Government, and not thrown away.

In this amendment proposed by Gandhi, a new clause was added with the original resolution. 'Pending such introduction, this Congress begs loyally to respond to the sentiments expressed in the Royal Proclamation, *viz,* 'let the new era begin with a common determination among my people and my officers to work together for a common purpose and I trust that both the authorities and the people will cooperate so to work the reforms as to secure the early establishment of full

responsible government' and this Congress offers its warmest thanks to the Rt. Hon'able E.S. Montagu for his labours in connection with them.'

While launching a severe indictment against General Dyer and other officials, Mrs. Annie Besant observed, 'We indict these officials on their own words spoken with a shamelessness that they did not realise apparently the criminality of what had happened, but spoke it out in public as though nothing had been done. Now there are two kinds of offences, private and public. Where a private wrong is done, where an offence is committed against an individual, there the individual has the right to forgive and forget the injury inflicted. But where wrong has been committed against the helpless and defenceless, where force has been used against unresisting and harmless crowds, where the massacre only stopped when the ammunition was exhausted, when, in a closed space, from where none could escape, the General commanding directed the fire on the outlets of the closed space, until they were choked with the bodies of the dead and of the dying, then it is not a private wrong to be forgiven, but it is a public wrong to be punished.

The Congress protested against the attempt being made in South Africa and particularly the Transvaal to deprive the Indian settlers of the rights of property and trade hitherto enjoyed by them, and wished that the Government of India would secure the repeal of the recently enacted legislation and otherwise ensure the protection of the status of the Indian settlers in South Africa. It was of opinion that the anti-Indian agitation now going on in East Africa was utterly unscrupulous and trusted that the Government of India would safeguard the right of free and unrestricted emigration from India to East Africa and the full civil and political rights of the Indian settlers in East Africa including the East African territory conquered from Germany.

The Congress resolved that having regard to the correspondence between the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and M.K. Gandhi, and between Lord Hunter and Pandit Malaviya, this Congress was of opinion that H.H. the Lieutenant-Governor's action in not permitting even a few of the Punjab leaders undergoing imprisonment to attend and sit in the committee room even as prisoners under custody to assist and instruct counsel constituted a serious injustice and that it left no other course open to the Sub-Committee of the Congress to take than the one taken by it; it therefore endorsed and approved of the firm and dignified action taken by the

Sub-committee and its appointing committee to make an investigation and submit a report.

Resolved that this Congress while fully recognising the grave provocation that led to a sudden outburst of mob frenzy, deeply regrets and condemns the excesses committed in certain parts of the Punjab and Gujarat resulting in the loss of lives and injury to person and property during the month of April last.

'Resolved that, in view of the fact that neither the Hunter Committee nor the Congress Commission has finished its examination of witnesses and issued its Report, this Congress, while expressing its horror and indignation at the revelations already made and condemnation of the atrocities admitted, refrains from urging any definite steps to be taken against the offenders, yet, having regard to the cold-blooded, calculated massacre of innocent men and children, an act without parallel in modern times, it urges upon the Government of India and Secretary of State that, as a preliminary to legal proceedings being taken against him, General Dyer should be immediately relieved of his command.'

In view of the oppressive regime of Michael O'Dwyer in the Punjab and the admitted facts brought out before Hunter Committee, that he approved of and endorsed General Dyer's massacre at the Jallianwala Bagh, the Congress called upon His Majesty's Government to relieve Michael O'Dwyer of his present duties in this country as member of the Army Commission, as preliminary to necessary legal action being taken against him.

The Congress offered its respectful condolence to the relatives of those persons whether English or Indian who were killed and sympathy to those who were wounded or incapacitated during the April disturbances. It also resolved that the site known as Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar be acquired for the nation and be registered in the names of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru as trustees, and that it be used as a memorial to perpetuate the memory of those who were killed or wounded on the 13th day of April during the massacre by General Dyer, and in order to give effect to the intention of the Congress the following were appointed as members of the Committee: 1. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, 2. Pandit Motilal Nehru, 3. Mahatma Gandhi, 4. Swami Shraddhananda, 5. Lala Girdhari Lal, 6. Dr. Saifud din Kitchlew, and 7. Lala Harkishen Lal.

The Congress also decided that it was impossible to have real peace in India until the legislation popularly known as the Rowlatt Act which was passed in the face of unanimous opposition in the country was repealed, and it, therefore, respectfully urged upon the Secretary of State for India to advise His Majesty to veto the said Act or otherwise to secure its repeal.

It was passed that in view of the fact that Lord Chelmsford had completely forfeited the confidence of the people of this country, this Congress beseeched His Imperial Majesty to immediately recall the Viceroy. 'It further decided that India was fit for full responsible government, the Reforms Act was inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing and that parliament should take early steps to establish full responsible government in India in accordance with the principle of self-determination.'

The Congress protested against the hostile attitude of some of the British ministers towards the Turkish and Khilafat question as disclosed by their utterances and most earnestly appealed to, and urged upon His Majesty's Government to settle the Turkish question in accordance with the just and legitimate sentiments of Indian Muslims and the solemn pledges of the Prime Minister without which there could be no real contentment among the people of India. It was also resolved that no Indian subject of His Majesty shall be liable to suffer in liberty, life, property or in respect of free speech or writing or of the right of association, except under sentence by an ordinary Court of Justice and as a result of lawful and open trial.

'That the press shall be free and that no licence or security shall be demanded on the registration of a press or a newspaper; that corporal punishment shall not be inflicted on any subject of His Majesty save under conditions applying equally to all other British subjects and that all laws, ordinances and regulations now or hereafter in existence, that are in any wise inconsistent with the provisions of this Statute shall be void and of no validity whatever.'

It was decided that the promotion of *Swadeshi* movement to its utmost extent was essential for national progress and prosperity and as over 73 per cent, of the population of India was agricultural and poor, a revival of the ancient industry of hand spinning and hand-weaving should be given priority.

The Congress appreciated the valuable services rendered by Lala Lajpat Rai to the cause of the country by his earnest and self-sacrificing efforts of constitutional agitation in the United States of America by representing the view of the Congress before proper authorities in America in the matter of the demand for self-government and self-determination for India and requested him to continue his efforts as before.

It recorded its condemnation of the unjust treatment meted out to university and school students in the Punjab under the direct, or indirect instruction of martial law authorities, and hoped that immediate steps would be taken by local government to cancel all punishments awarded to students without trial.

The Congress demanded the immediate repeal of the Indian Press Act and recorded its emphatic disapproval of the wholly unjustifiable deportation of B.G. Horniman and urged on the Viceroy the immediate cancellation of the order.

It was passed that Delhi should be constituted into a Regulation Province and that it should have a Legislative Council to assist the Chief Commissioner and at least two representatives in the Legislative Assembly and two seats on the Legislative Assembly be allotted to Ajmer-Merwara and British Rajputana out of the additional seats provided by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Reform Bill.

Beside the Congress considered that there was no justification for the exclusion of Burma from the operation of the new Government of India Act and was of opinion that in accordance with the wishes of the people of Burma, the same reforms as applied to the major provinces should also be applied to Burma.

Jawaharlal Nehru stated in his *Autobiography* about the historic significance of the Congress session at Amritsar: 'The Amritsar Congress was the first Gandhi Congress. Lokamanya Tilak was also present and took a prominent part in the deliberations, but there could be no doubt about it that the majority of the delegates, and even more so the great crowds outside, looked to Gandhi for leadership. The slogan *Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai* began to dominate the Indian political horizon. The Ali Brothers, recently discharged from internment, immediately joined the Congress, and the national movement began to take a new shape and develop a new orientation.[21]

Undoubtedly, the session had much historic significance as it was presided over by a prominent political leader of the calibre of Pandit Motilal Nehru and the comprehensive speech he delivered at this occasion. The president government for its non-fulfilment of promises which it had made earlier to the people of India. Indeed the pledges, he stated made by the British statesmen had been forgotten. He also advised the people to become conscious of their rights and wage a non-violent war to achieve them.

Motilal Nehru showered a word of praise on the people of the Punjab for their sense of bravery determination, fearlessness and selfless service for the cause of the nations which they had shown at Amritsar and other places through their physical and economic sufferings. In this regard, he detailed the consistent anti-British agitation which occurred in the Punjab on the eve of the *Komagata Maru* incident. This episode had greatly awakened the conscience of the people towards the misrule of the British bureaucracy in India from whom it was not possible to expect fair justice. To substantiate his point, he mentioned about the 'effective power' used during the administration of Michael O'Dwyer who used the existing laws with all kinds of severity.

The president had a severe dig on the Rowlatt legislation which he described as the 'negation of law and justice. He was also critical of the tortures, numerous arrest and conviction of innocent people without any kind of *vakil,* appeal or *daleel*. This kind of behaviour was labelled as insulting and degrading which left an ugly blot on the Indian statute book.

A major portion of the presidential speech was devoted to the inhuman treatment meted out to the people of Amritsar, Whereas, the deportations of Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal where described as administrative blunders on the part of British bureaucracy, public flogging, orders of crawling and other illegal orders which led to inhuman tortures of various sections of society were condemned as indecent and brutal in their nature. Besides the act of bombing on innocent people of Gujranwala was severely criticised.

The president also touched upon the process of constitutional development in India and criticised the government for ignoring the insistent demand of the country for a declaration of rights. The question of Khilafat and its significance in terms of its political implications—both national and international was reiterated by him. The other prominent issues taken up were the condition of Indian in South Africa,

Smuts-Gandhi settlement, question of indentured labour, *swedeshi,* sufferings of B.G. Horniman and last but not the least, the implications of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Talking of reforms, he emphatically declared that Indians would not rest content till they had gained the full measure of that demand.

The chairman of the reception committee, Swami Shraddhanda was critical of the tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh and the Martial Law promulgated by Michael O'Dwyer in some districts of the Punjab. He had a dig on the doings of General Dyer and Colonel Johnson who mismanaged the whole administrative machinery and used it against the innocent and nonviolent people. He was much critical of the prevailing system of education and deplored the western methods of eating, drinking and dressing. He above all, speltout the idea of national education to be imparted to the youth of India.

Numerous resolutions passed at this session of the Indian National Congress dealt with the plight of Indians living in Transvaal indenture labour in Fiji, appreciation of the services rendered by C.F. Andrews in the Punjab, Fiji, East and South Africa; investigations of the Disorders Inquiry Committee; excesses committed by the government in the Punjab and Gujarat; calculated massacre of innocent men and children, oppressive measures undertaken by Michael O'Dwyer, sympathy for persons who lost their lives in April disturbances, raising a memorial at Jallianwala Bagh and formation of a committee to execute such a plan, veto of the Rowlatt Act, release of all political prisoners, recall of the Viceroy of India on account of the forfeiture of his confidence of the people of the country, demand for full responsible government, inadequancy of the Reforms Act, protest against the doings of some of the British ministers towards the Turkish and Khilafat questions, guarantee of civil rights by the government, freedom of press, invalidity of all laws, revival of ancient industry of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, appreciation for the services rendered by the members of the British Labour Party, promotion of labour unions for the improvement of social, economic and political conditions of the people, appreciation of the assistance rendered by the British Congress Committee, appreciation of the resolution of the All India Muslim League recommending the discontinuance of the slaughter of cows in India on *Bakr-Id* festival, condemnation of Martial Law used against students, unjust deportation of B.G. Horniman, re-examination of the revenue system in India, recommendations for a Legislative Council to assist

the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, extension of reforms to Burma and last but not the least, the decision to hold the next session of the Indian National Congress in Nagpur.

The members of the Congress thus dispersed with the deep feelings of sympathy for those who had suffered inexplicable insults, indignities, tortures and economic losses. It felt must concern about their arrests, convictions, deportation and deaths. It made the people realise that the cause they were pleading was for their innocent and non-violent brethren. This kind of feeling soon spread in every nook and corner of India. A few months ahead in the year were indeed most crucial in its dimensions and a most significant decision was made to launch an all-India Movement with a deep involvement of the masses of the country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The event of 1919 and the question of the Khilafat formed the deep linkage of this kind of decision which was approved by the leadership of the Congress Party. It was indeed an all-India Movement in which the mass participation was a glaring phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer fired and continued to fire until the crowd dispersed. By doing so, he considered that this was the least amount of firing which could produce the 'necessary moral and widespeard effect.' He did not consult anybody before taking such a bloody, ghastly tragic and inhuman step of 'butchering' unarmed and nonviolent assembly of persons like sheep and goats in shambles. He gave no warning, a common prevalent legal norm, generally carried out by the officials incharge of such an assembly, to the people assembled in the Bagh. 'The soldiers began to fire at once. No warning was given.'

'The terrified crowd, estimated by General Dyer at the time to number 5,000 but which was afterwards agreed to have numbered at least 25,000 people, surged outwards splitting into two vast waves, both vainly trying to escape the torturing bullets which continued to fly for fifteen minutes....Many people were hit in the back. The soldiers continued firing in the direction in which the crowd was running.[22]

It was an act of sheer massacre of an unarmed assembly, an appalling atrocity and ghastly action perpetrated without any kind of serious thinking. If the existing situation was thought to be unmanageable and beyond control, its only solution was not gunning

down the people. Any other solution, far less tragic and devastative in magnitude and consequence, if operated upon after consultations with the seasoned bureaucracy, would not have brought about such incalculable loss of human life.

'The exact figures of the killed and the injured will never be known, whether 379—which was the official version-died, or one thousand, is irrelevant. The fact is that while the Government in England was announcing its intention to train Indians for self-government through political reforms, its agents in India were actually giving Indians lessons in frightfulness to develop the qualities of servility, cowardice, hypocrisy and sycophancy.'[23]

Gandhi wrote in his autobiography,[24] 'Sir Michael O'Dwyer held me responsible for all that had happened in the Punjab, and some irate young Punjabis held me responsible for the Martial Law. They asserted, that if only I had not suspended civil disobedience, there would have been no Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Some of them even went the length of threatening me with assassination if I went to the Punjab.' But Gandhi felt otherwise. He was indeed impatient to go to the Punjab to have the first hand knowledge of the prevailing situation. He had never been there and that made him all the more anxious to 'see things for myself.' Dr. Satyapal, Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew and Pandit Rambhaj Dutt Chaudhari who had invited him to the Punjab, were at this time in jail.

The government officials tried ways and methods of extortion which indeed left a lot of discontent amongst the people. The Punjab was greatly hurt and was seething with dissatisfaction, anger and discontent. The unmitigated force and unscrupulous methods used, naturally, when became unbearable, came in for trenchant criticism by one and all, and the Congress leadership did not hestitate to take steps, in a non-violent way, such steps which should be an eye-opener for the British administration in the province.

Many of the orders passed during the period of Martial Law invariably caused general inconvenience. Under this category were the promulgation of curfew order, restriction on railway travelling and prohibition against people assembling in greater numbers than ten. In fact, the Rowlatt Bills wanted the government of India to continue to enjoy the same emergency powers, given to them during the war even during peace time. 'We had thus, on the one hand, the offer of reforms by the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme, and, on other, the Rowlatt Report

proposing to arm the Government with extraordinary powers during peace time. The meaning of this dual and contradictory policy was not lost on the people.'

The Martial Law regime had crossed all 'limits of decency' and the honour of any persons in the province was unsafe. Besides numbers rules and regulations were applied indiscriminately and innocent persons had to bear the brunt of the hasty and illegal actions of the Martial Law administration. No profession was safe. In the words of Dr. Tara Chand. 'The Martial Law regime from 15th of April to 29th of May was a horrie tale of atrocious dealings commandeering of transport, stopping of free distribution of food to the needy, convictions by summary courts, imprisonment, stripes, public flogging, marching students 16 miles a day in the hot midday sun of May etc...The English officials—civil and military, appeared on the stage in their true colour, with the veneer of civilization suddenly scrubbed out. They were gripped by fear, scared by shadows and behaved like animals at bay, ferocious and blood-thirsty.'

Michael O'Dwyer, General Dyer, Colonel Johnson and other British officials, 'exhibited no sense of shame or remorse' in relating their 'misdeeds' in the form of inhuman atrocities perpetrated on innocent people of the Punjab and instead gave bold and fearless statements before the commission of enquiry. At times their replies were baseless and meaningless. But it clearly appeared that all the British officials were in league with one another in teaching Indians the worst lesson of their life by crushing their sentiments with the use of force hitherto unheard of. Misery was thus thrust upon a major portion of the population of the Punjab and they were crowed down to the utmost. The province was disolate by the Martial Law authorities and the news of the atrocities only 'trickled to the rest of India long afterwards and even then its magnitude was not known to the people of other provinces.'

Before the trials of the prisoners were commenced, gallows were erected in a public place in anticipation of the judges awarding the punishment of hanging. These gallows were erected as near to the scene of the mob outrage as possible. It was elicited in the course of examination that this was done by the orders of Michael O'Dwyer. But before the hanging order could be carried out, public hanging was vetoed. This kind of punishment by handing suggested a serious reflection. Eighteen persons were hanged as a result of the Martial Law trials throughout the province, and many more would have been hanged, but for the strong agitation that was started in many corners of India

and the timely and firm stand of Motilal Nehru who entered into cable communication with the Secretary of State, and pending proceedings in appeal, asked for the suspension of death sentences. At this, the Secretary of State also intervened who advised the Viceroy to suspend these death sentences.

The pledge of Gandhi for the inauguration of *satyagraha* was widely acclaimed and signed. It also proved instrumental for fraternisation of Hindus and Muslims, the Hindu leaders being asked to address the people even in mosques. Here was a unique and novel method of political action by a leader of the largest political party in India who had charisma amongst the masses of the country. His call for non-violent action had caught the imagination of the people who were much impressed by the sincerity of the new leader and the spirituality of the movement which was based on truth and non-violent creed. Undoubtedly, Gandhi's call for *satyagraha* was encountered with all seriousness by the machinery of the government. It was in the Punjab, however, that this movement met with vehement opposition from the government and a crisis of immense magnitude was in evidence.

There is no doubt that in some places there were serious riots and the mobs committed destruction of life and property in consequence of and as a mark of resentment against the functioning of the British government in India, but their intention was not to put and end to the British government nor were the means adopted by them calculated to effect that. Their acts may amount in law to waging war under the Penal Code, but it was not rebellion in the sense in which it is ordinarily understood.'

The government of India entrusted General Dyer with an important assignment after his gruesome venture at Jallianwala Bagh. On 8th May he led his Brigade to the North-West Frontier Province and after three weeks he was ordered to proceed for the relief of Thal. In this expedition Dyer was instrumental in repulsing the Afghan forces operating under the command of Nadir Khan. And soon after the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army eulogised the services rendered by Dyer in this campaign. In October 1919, Dyer was entrusted with the permanent command of a Brigade and exactly after four months, in January, he was promoted to the temporary rank of a Divisional Commander. But it is curious to learn that in March 1920 he was ordered to resign his command. This kind of severe action against him

was unbelievable for General Dyer. He in fact took up the whole case in a casual way and did not bother to engage in defence counsel when he happened to appear before the Hunter Committee. 'The manner in which he prepared his defence—he did not even ask to be shown the specific charges being made against him—his behaviour towards the Indian members and his low opinion of the proceedings as a whole, all point to this.'

Judged by the terrible and gruesome happenings of April and May in various parts of the Punjab we get a clear inkling from the rumour prevalent at the time that it was definitely General Dyer's intention to 'raze Amritsar to the ground as a fitting punishment for the horrors of the 10th April committed by the populace. Altogether, towards the latter half of the year 1919, the situation in India—What with the appointment of the Hunter Committee with no Congress representative thereon, and with a Reform Bill which was but a poor performance of vast promise—was not merely gloomy but portentous.'[25]

The political prisoners fell into two classes—the educated and uneducated. The educated persons were, to a great extent, kept in separate cells; for the most part, they were persons who could afford to pay for special diet, a privilege which is allowed to an undertrial prisoners under the rules.[26] They were not allowed to have cooked food brought from outside, but they could obtain fresh fruit, biscuits and books from outside and also had their own bedding, excluding pillows or thick *razais* which could not be searched. A few had their own camp beds, and hospital beds were also given to some of them. For food, the jailor arranged three classes of diet, the prices being about one rupee, twelve and ten annas.[27]

Ian Colvin in *The Life of General Dyer* commented. 'When at last he (Sir Michael O'Dwyer) externed Gandhi and deported Kitchlew and Satyapal, he precipitated the trouble he had laboured to avert. For this he has been charged with provocation; but, as he afterwards explained, he acted on the precedent of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh in 1907, and thought, as in that case "their removal far more likely to disorganise an agitation rapidly growing dangerous than to lead to open order'.

It is indeed strange to learn that General Dyer was honoured at the Golden Temple in the presence of a huge gathering. Thus the '.... General earned not the confidence only but the level and gratitude

of the Sikhs. When he returned to Amritsar, he and his Brigade-Major, Captain Briggs, were summoned to the Golden Temple, and found themselves in the presence of the Chief priests and leaders of the sect.

'Sahib', they said, 'you must become a Sikh even as Nikalseyn Sahib became a Sikh'.

'The General thanked them for the honour, but he objected that he could not as British officer let his hair grow long.

'Arur Singh laughed, 'We will let you off the long hair' he said.

'General Dyer offered another objection, 'But I cannot give up smoking.'

'That you must do' said Arur Singh.

"No" said the General, I am very sorry, but I cannot given up smoking.'

'The priest conceded, "We will let you give it up gradually. 'That I promise you, "said the General, "at the rate of one cigarette a year."

'The Sikhs, chuckling proceeded with the initiation. General Dyer and Captain Briggs were invested with the five *kakas*, the sacred emblems of the war-like brotherhood and so became Sikhs. Moreover, a shrine was built to General Dyer at their holy place, Guru Sat Sultani, and when a few days afterwards came the news that the Afghans were making war upon India, the Sikh leaders offered the General ten thousand men to fight for the British Raj if only he would consent to command them. General Dyer reported this offer, but it was refused, and a magnificent impulse of loyalty was allowed to fade away'.[28]

This kind of humble and submissive behaviour tinged with the highest degree of loyalty, faithfulness and flattery appear to be questionable from a section of Sikh community. It was performed at a time when a few hundreds of innocent persons of the Punjab were put to death in an inhuman way by the bullets of soldiers—under the command of General Dyer. While the whole nation criticised and condemned the action of General Dyer, both publicly and in writing to the press this kind of treatment to the General is not understandable and one wonders why at all a religious place like the Golden Temple was chosen to honour him. May be that this highest seat of sikh religion was under the control of those persons who aspired for more favours from the government? It is therefore evident that such an element could go to any limit to please and flatter a British army official unmindful

of the fact that he was the perpetrator of ghastly tragedy unprecedented in the history of India. Besides the bulk offer of Sikh soldiers in the Afghan war was an action which could be expected from the same kind of persons who had honoured General Dyer in the Golden Temple. This kind of flattered loyalty was negatived in an indirect way in the end of the same year, when at the session of the Indian National Congress, Pandit Motilal Nehru and other leaders of all-India fame levelled trenchant criticism against the doings of General Dyer and Michael O'Dwyer and pleaded for concerted action for forging unity at all levels so that serious efforts could be made towards achieving the political goal for which the Congress had been aspiring and propagating since long.

It is indeed curious to note about the rank statement which Dyer gave before the Hunter Committee. He not only admitted all the gruesome facts connected with the episode of 13th April, but he boasted of his achievements and sought to justify them in the best possible way. To him it was a 'merciful act' to fire without warning on an inoffensive crowd because it might have made fun of him if he had refrained from doing so.

The finding of the Hunter Committee reveal the fact that there was hardly any justification for the introduction of Martial Law in order to have full control over the existing situation which had not deteriorated as it was thought to be. The Committee admitted, 'The wisdom of continuing Martial Law for the whole length of time it remained effective in the Punjab is more open to objection than the original declaration.'

Dyer indeed gave an unconvincing plea before the Disorders Inquiry Committee that the crowd in the Jallianwala Bagh appeared so dense that 'if a determined rush had been made at any time, arms or no arms, my small force must instantly have been overpowers and consequently I was very careful of not giving the mob a change of organising.'[29]

Dyer also admitted that he had no idea of the exact geography of the *Bagh* and he was unaware of the exits of its campus, 'While standing on the raised platform, he could see the whole *Bagh* and....if the object was that the crowd should disperse then there was no justification for firing towards any other exit'.[30]

An other consideration which weighed heavily on Dyer in deciding to undertake this kind of severe action was mainly guided by

the character, thinking and the earlier doings of the people of Punjab whose demobilized soldiers were greatly influenced by the Ghadrites. He had also adopted the night marish attitude towards the *majabi* Sikhs, the *danda* army raised in various towns of the Punjab and the threat of an Afghan invasion. These elements, he thought, were bent upon other throwing the British *Raj* and unless stringent measures were adopted, there could be no peace in the region.

From the working of Dyer's mind it appeared that he feared at the movement that a few Europeans living in Amritsar might be wiped out by the violent action of the local population if a timely warning tinged with a severe military action was not operated upon. He thus had in mind the earlier violent happenings in Amritsar and elsewhere in the Punjab when a few Europeans and murdered, banks and post offices were looted and footed and Miss Sherwood was left for dead in a street.

It is quite obvious that even prior to the firing in the *Bagh* or during and after the firing, Dyer was not mobbed. Nor did he encounter any difficulty which could persuade him to take such a severe action. Two days earlier, calm and quiet prevailed in the city and no untoward incident was visible to the military administration. The burial of a few dead bodies on 11th April was quite peaceful. The plea of self-defence is also falsified as there was no violent happening, stone-throwing or putting anything to fire.

Puckle, however, mentioned about the state of Dyer's health six months after this massacre. The General told him, 'I haven't had a night's sleep since that happened. I keep on seeing it all over again.'[31] On the basis of this statement, Rupert Furneaux stated in *Massacre at Amritsar* that Dyer was suffering from arterio sclerosis and he 'may have misjudged the position, thinking that the two waves as they surged back were going to rush him.'[32] Probably by stating so the innocence of Dyer is being proved. But talking into consideration his health-chart of the last two years, if not more, Dyer was found quite fit both physically and mentally to discharge his numerous and hazardous army duties. His health, of course, began to deteriorate after this event.[33]

It is evident that the first speech in the *Bagh* began at 3 O'clock. Dyer had already taken measures to deal with the situation. As he had made up his mind to teach the local people a lesson, he took no steps to prevent the holding of the meeting nor did he post any kind of

prohibitory order on the main gate of the Bagh. Besides he took the command of the force himself which a normal circumstances such a small force is commanded by a Captain or a Major and never a senior officer of Dyer's rank.

One could ask a pertinent question about this kind of action by Dyer. Was the crowd gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh armed in any sense? It is quite evident from the numerous witnesses including Dyer that the assembly of people had no weapon or stick in their hands and hence they had no intention of any king of violence on that day. The crowd showed no mood of attacking anybody nor were the violent slogans raised which could provoke the mob against the local administration. This has been clarified by the statement of Michael O'Dywer before the Hunter Committee. 'Dyer was aware that his retreat might be cut off...he went on firing, but he thought afterwards (he was very frank about it) that was not their intention after seeing the place more fully, and that was one of the methods of egress so as to escape from the *Bagh.*'[34] Plomer also stated, 'When there was firing crowds were rushing in the opposite direction.'[35] Therefore it is quite evident that the people in the Bagh never made an attempt to attack the soldiers.

It may be possible to establish Dyer's motive in connection with the kind of action he had executed on 13th April. When he took charge of the whole situation, he was empowered with full authority to establish law and order. Even Miles Irving and Kitchin were not clear to what extent they had abdicated their authority and responsibility. But under the army control, the civil authorities including the police played a subordinate role even during the days when martial law was clamped in Amritsar. Under these circumstances, Dyer lost his contact with the civil authorities and did not bother to take their help, advice and support of any kind at the most crucial time. The stern action taken independently by a single individual was the result of the feeling of wielding unlimited power. Had he cared to consult the local officials, the disaster perpetrated by the firing on peaceful, non-violent and unarmed assembly would have been averted.

Valentine Chirol described this tragic incident thus: '...I entered the same narrow lane by which General Dyer...entered with about fifty rifles...The crowd was estimated by him at 6,000, by others at 10,000 and more, but practically unarmed, and all quite defenceless. The panic-stricken multitude broke at once, but for ten consecutive minutes he kept up merciless fusillade, in all 1500 rounds, on that seething mass of

humanity, caught like rats in a trap, vainly rushing for the few narrow exits or lying flat on the ground to escape the rain of bullets, which he personally directed to the points where the crowd was thickest. 'The "targets" to use his own word, were good...he deliberately made up his mind while marching his men to Jallianwala, and would not have flinched from still greater slaughter if the narrowness of the approaches had not compelled him to leave his machine-gun behind. His purpose, he declared, was to strike terror into the whole of the Punjab.'[36]

Pearay Mohan in his comprehensive work on *An Imaginary Rebellion* opined that Hans Raj was a secret agent of the local police and that he was instrumental in collecting people at one place so that it might have been easy for General Dyer to deal with them.[37] Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and C.F. Andrews held the same opinion. M.R. Jayakar had the same kind of assessment. 'Of all these facts it is suggested that the meeting had been planned by Hans Raj and his associates with a view to making a large number of people gather at the *Bagh*. Whether the authorities at Amritsar were parties to this plan and yielded to it in their desire for revenge, we are unable to say, as we have not enough evidence before us to support a definite finding. But it is any rate perfectly clear that Dyer took the fullest advantage of the meeting, in effecting on the inhabitants of Amritsar, as condign and complete a punishment as was needed to satisfy their lust for revenge.'[38]

One question which naturally arises with reference to the administration of Martial Law is, whether the Crown or the military authorities had any power at common law to create any new offences. According to the law in England, they clearly did not possess any such power. Where it was necessary to enable the military authorities to issue any rules or regulations affecting civilians and where it was necessary to treat any infringements as offences, the practice in England had been to confer such powers by statute. The English Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act 1914, expressly conferred power to issue regulations and authorised trial and punishment by courts martial. It will be interesting to note that by the Defence of the Realm Amendment Act 1915, any person not subject to the naval discipline Act or to military law, who was alleged to be guilty of an offence against any regulations made under the Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act 1914 was entitled to claim to be tired by a civil court with a jury instead of being tried by court-martial.

The officer administering Martial Law in Lahore had issued a large number of proclamations partaking of the character of regulations and providing for the trial and punishment of persons guilty of an infringement of these regulations. These proclamations merely recited that the government of India had proclaimed Martial Law and that superior military authority had appointed him to administer Martial Law. No other source of authority was quoted and while the officer-in-charge was entitled to take measures reasonably necessary for the safety and peace of the are under his command, he had, to all appearance, no valid authority empowering him to create any new offences or try and punish civilians for infringements of his regulations. The government of India, no doubt, was empowered by the Defence of India Act, IV of 1915, to make rules for securing the public safety and the Defence of British India and to create offences in respect of contraventions of such rules but it did not appear that the Governor-General-in-Council had any power to delegate his powers under Section (2) to the military authorities. We do not know whether the officer administering Martial Law tried and punished any persons for infringements of his regulations, but if he did, his proceedings could not be treated as *ipso facto* valid. A perusal of the different orders passed by him also created a doubt whether they were called for by the military necessities of the situation or by a desire to strike fear into the minds of the inhabitants by a show of exuberant severity or to secure certain conveniences for the public or particular sections thereof which could have been secured by the civil government. Whatever might have been the reason of the regulations, any infringement of them could not be an offence unless it was one under some other law.

During the next year when the clouds of the first Non-Co-operation were visible on the political horizon of India, Gandhi had made up his mind to part with the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal and the Zulu War medals awarded to him by the British government for his meritorious services. In a better to the Viceroy written on 2nd August 1920, he was much critical of the British police in India, particularly its light-hearted treatment which it showed towards General Dyer and Michael O'Dwyer. He stated, 'But the punitive measures taken by General Dyer...were out of all proportions to the crime of the people and amounted to wanton cruelty and inhumanity unparalleled in modern times and...Your Excellency's light hearted treatment of the official crime, your exoneration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Mr. Montagu's

despatch and above all your shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and callous disregard of the feelings betrayed by the House of Lords have filled me with the greatest misgivings regarding the future of empire, have estranged me completely from the present government and have disabled me from tendering as I have hitherto tendered my loyal cooperation.[39]

Dwyer was known for a violent temper when he was in his teens. Born in Murree near Islamabad and educated in Simla and Sandhurst, he knew Indian particularly the Punjab very well. His father had established the Dyer Meakin brewery at Solon.[40] He was thus brought up in an atmosphere which had engendered in him a complex typical of British character. Like many others of his time, he was taught that the whites were a superior race which had a Divine Right to rule over India.

Even O'Dwyer was of the firm conviction that India could only be rules by an iron hand and he had displayed the working of his mind when he had crushed the Ghadr Movement, a few years earlier, by taking very severe action against the revolutionaries. He always showed contempt for 'educated Indians' as he called them trouble-makers. So far so that he lebelled Gandhi as 'an unctuous hypocrite with his ascetic pose'.

For shooting at mob in the civil area where there is a violent mob in the shape of a procession or otherwise, the first and the foremost duty of an official dealing with it is to warn the assembly to disperse. This warning, according to law, is repeated a number of times on the mike or by any other convenient device. Sometime it is thus given to the mob to disperse, run or hide. But if the response is negative, firing is resorted to in the minimum possible magnitude, avoiding, as far as possible, serious injury tantamount to death. In this case, neither any kind of warning was announced nor the norms of the use of minimum force were adhered to. The callousness in which the orders were given to shoot down a few hundred persons in the *Bagh* does not justify, with any amount of argument, by the perpetrator of the ghastly crime or by any of his supporter and sympathiser.

For such a severe action against a peaceful assembly in the *Bagh*, one could remark that General Dyer was one of the unimaginative generals who probably had the confirmed belief that it was his bounden duty to defend the *Raj* by any method however, severe, harsh and violent

it might be. One could also say that the General might have thought to win military laurels for himself by silencing the innocent unarmed people to death. Such a thinking or a plan proved a sort of boomerang for him and instead of gaining any laurel, he had to pay a heavy price for it.

The massacre no doubt shot India to its depths but the British Raj ended after a consistent struggle for about two-and-a-half decades till it achieved its desired goal in 1947.

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33. Dyer was fifty-five years old in 1919.
34. Disorders Inquiry Committee, Vol. VI, p. 68
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36. Valentine Chirol, II, pp. 177-78.
37. Pearay Mohan, *An Imaginary Rebellion*, Lahore, pp. 17ff.
38. See M.R. Jayakar Papers, No. 477.
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40. Now it is called Mohan Meakin Brewery.

7

Historical Background

After the death of Tilak in 1920, Gandhi emerged as the unchallenged leader of the Congress. The crowded post-war political developments in India, particularly the Punjab wrongs, England's approbation of General Dyer, disregard for the report of the Congress committee on Jallianwala Bagh tragedy by the government and the harm done to Turkey by the Treaty of Sevres made Gandhi a non-cooperator. He gave up soft words for the Act of 1919, prepared a scheme of non-cooperation with the Government to paralyse the administration, rectify the Khilafat wrongs and achieve *swaraj* within the British Empire if possible, and outside if necessary. The decision to launch the Non-Cooperation Movement marked a new era in the history of the nationalist movement in respect of the definition of goal, technique to its achievement and conjoint character of the movement. The constitutional means for securing political concessions were abandoned and a new phase of radical, non-violent mass struggle coupled with socio-economic constructive programme on universal basis began. Freedom struggle took articulate shape for the first time and was to be fought in the form of peaceful revolution on all possible planes with complete unity of purpose by all the communities of India.

The Calcutta Congress adopted Gandhi's resolution, the Nagpur Congress endorsed his programme with overwhelming majority and the Khilafat Committee accepted his lead. The peaceful non-cooperation programme composed of a comprehensive scheme of non-violent *satyagraha* against the foreign government characterised by boycott of elections, law courts, government educational institutions and government functions, the relinquishment of government posts and honorary offices, surrender of official titles and honours, establishment of arbitary courts, founding of national schools and *vidyapiths,* removal of untouchability, introduction of prohibition and inculcation of social

unity and stability in the country. During this movement, the whole country was stirred by the unparalled scene of fervour, devotion and sacrifice of teeming millions. Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel, and numerous other persons left their highly lucrative professions; thousands of students came out of colleges and schools, and many national institutions were founded where teachers worked on a pittance. A number of students of the Aligarh Muslim University left Jamia their studies at the bidding of Mohammed Ali and founded the Millia Islamia which later shifted to Delhi. Subhas Chandra Bose resigned his post in the Indian Civil Service and worked as the principal as a National College. Jawaharlal Nehru bade adieu to the Allahabad High Court and was drawn into the whirlpool of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Women also entered the national fold for the first time. The Indian people sensed and shared the happiness of their leader crusading for a common cause. They developed a sense of pride in that freedom. The old feeling of oppression and frustration was completely gone.[1]

By July 1921, the Non-Cooperation Movement had roused the whole country. The government sensed danger to British rule and took repressive measures. Thousands of *satyagrahis* were taken into custody and thrown behind the bars. Meeting and processions were banned and suppression was started by all possible means. The more was the suppression, the greater was the resistance.[2] The Moplahs took to violence and established a Khilafat Republic in Malabar in August. In November and December, the visit of the Prince of Wales was boycotted by observing *hartals* wherever he went. The Government used force to get the shops opened at several places. Sometimes violent clashes occurred between the non-cooperators and cooperators which was condemned and discouraged by Gandhi invariably.

However, this movement did not last long and Gandhi had to apply the reverse gear as soon as he saw violence increasing. The Moplah outbreak in Malabar, the riots in Bombay on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales, violence by Congress volunteers elsewhere and the retaliatory burning of policemen by the angry mob at Chauri Chaura disconcerted Gandhi and he suddenly announced the suspension of this movement.[3] After a few weeks Gandhi himself was arrested at Ahmedabad, brought to trial and sentenced to six years' imprisonment on 18 March 1922.

Despite its apparent failure, the Non-Cooperation Movement was not without its contribution to Indian nationalism. It was the first novel experiment of its kind in a series of freedom struggles launched under the inspiring guidance of Gandhi. It showed the way how a non-violent struggle would be launched in future and with what kind of discipline. It transformed the limited middle class nationalist movement of the Gandhian era into a mass movement.

The sudden suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement after the Chauri Chaura incident and the consequent findings of the Civil Disobedience Enqury Committee appointed by the leadership of the All India Congress Committee in June 1922 gave rise to a new political phenomenon and a serious turn to the existing institution of the political philosophy of the Congress. The latter action was undertaken ostensibly for the purpose of reviving the non-cooperation activities which had in the previous few months been almost paralysed by an intensive camping of ruthless repression by the government. The enquiry exposed the rottenness of the organisation of the movement. The question of mass civil disobedience was shelved and in its place arose the problem as to whether the original programme of boycott of the council should be maintained as heretofore. Three members of the committee, *viz.,* Motilal Nehru, V.J. Patel and Hamim Ajmal Khan expressed themselves strongly in favour of council entry, while the other three members M.A. Ansari, C. Rajagopalachari and Kasturi Ranga Iyer were opposed to it.

The report of the committee was presented to the president of the Congress. C.R. Das, on 30th October 1922 and its publication was obviously a signal of an acute press controversy which went on till the commencement of the Gaya Congress in December 1922. In his presidential address, Das threw in his lot with the pro-councillors. This created a serious controversy which consequently perpetrated the split. Soon after the Congress at Gaya, C.R. Das resigned the presidentship of the Congress and formed the Swaraj Party of those who favoured the council-entry. The election manifesto of the Swaraj Party, which Motilal Nehru issued on 14th October described it as "a party within the Congress and such as an integral part of the Congress. It is not and was never intended to be a rival organisation."

In the Legislative Assembly, the Swaraj Party delivered calculated blows at the prestige of the government on numerous issues. It threw out budgets and demanded a round table conference for a new constitution. The Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State, "For the

present, the Swarajist has it all his own way; there is none to compare with him; there is none to attack him..." In Bengal C.R. Das began his new crusade against the bureaucracy by voting against the salaries of ministers and also against the principal items of the budget. Twice in 1924 and once in 1925, he was able to throw out all the proposals for neither the appointment of ministers or the payment of any salaries to them. Besides he emphatically stated, "We want to destroy and get rid of a system which does not good and can do no good. We want to destroy it because we want to construct a system which can be worked with success and will enable us to do good to the masses."

The discipline of the Swaraj Party did not last long. The severe blow came with the defection of Lala Lajpat, the deputy leader of the party and Tambe from C.P. and Berar. The general elections held in the year 1926 reduced the strength of the Swarajists both at the centre and the provinces. Except in Madras, they lost many seats in other provinces. It, therefore, ultimately got merged with the Indian National Congress. No fixed dated can be declared for its merger as the ultimate compromise of the Swarajists with the Congress could hardly manifest itself in a written or verbal agreement. In fact, the Swaraj Party was a party within the Congress, active and strong enough to get its council-entry programme accepted by the Congress as a whole.

On the release of Gandhi on 5 February 1924 on medical grounds, the political atmosphere in the country was not suitable for a fresh freedom struggle without adequate preparation and proper occasion for it. He, therefore, devoted the next three years to a three-point constructive programme of *Khadi,* Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability. Organisational matters of unity of the Congress such as increase in membership, maintenance of unity and its revitalisation, direction of the minds of the educated urban class to the understanding and upliftment of the rural masses engaged his attention.

Lord Reading warned his successor, Lord Irwin, on his arrival in Bombay on 1st April 1936, that for about eighteen months, he would have comparatively quite time, but the second half of his term would be a period of trouble and anxiety. This forecast proved correct. Till November 1927, there was a lull in Indian politics; spinning and Hindu-Muslim problem were the only form of all-India activities in which Gandhi interested himself, as the first twelve months of Irwin's Viceroyalty were marked by as many as forty communal riots of which the most serious one was the Calcutta riot of April 1926.[4]

The appointment of the all-white statutory commission with John Simon as its chairman in 1927 caused much resentment, anger, agitation and above all, political awakening amongst the people of India. It brought various political forces on common platform and prompted them to chalk out a programme of according a cold reception to the commission. The Commission's landing in Bombay and visits to various cities and towns of India met with black flag demonstrations, and anti-British slogans.[5] At some places, there was *lathi* charge by the police, and in the process, Lala Lajpat Rai sustained severe *lathi* blows as a result of which he died. The loss of an eminent political leader of his stature was greatly mourned, and much resentment was shown by Indian leadership representing different shades of opinion.[6] The British attitude and policy towards India came in for severe criticism by the Indian press, intelligentsia and political leaders. The new programme of an organized political action was announced at the madras session of the Congress held in December 1927 under the presidentship of M.A. Ansari who declared the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence. The Congress gave full assurance to the Muslims that "their Legitimate interests should be secured...by the reservation of seats in joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in central legislature..."[7] It also authorised the Congress Working Committee to confer with the other parties to draft a *swaraj* constitution for India. The committee appointed by the All Parties Conference consisted of members belonging to various organisations. Motilal Nehru was appointed its chairman and other members were Ali Imam, Shuaib Qureshi, M.S. Aney, Sardar Mangal Singh, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Subhas Chandra Bose and G.R. Pradhan.[8]

The Nehru Committee Report which covered a wide range of constitutional issues, was published on 15 August 1928. It recommended that the future constitution of India should be based on full responsible government on the model of the constitution of the self-governing dominions; no seat should be reserved for Muslims where they were in a majority, but only at the centre and in the provinces in which they were in a minority; the constitution of India should be federal in character and the Indian States should be welcome to join it; the new Indian legislature should be empowered to legislate had budged for the Indian army, and that its control should be transferred to a responsible Indian minister of defence; and the legislative power of the commonwealth should be vested in a bicameral legislature and the executive power in the King "exercisiable by the Governor-General as

the King's representative acting on the advice of the Executive Council."

The reaction of the Indian Muslims to the report was mixed. The nationalist Muslims like Maulana Azad, M.A. Ansari and T.A.K. Sherwani supported it whole-heartedly. The followers of Mohammed Shafi adopted a non-possumus attitude. Another groups led by the Aga Khan felt that the Nehru Report repudiated the Lucknow Pact regarding weightage and separate electorate and that the Hindus were planning to secure power for themselves. The fourth group of Muslims was led by M.A. Jinnah who felt that the destiny of Muslims was linked with the rest of Indian population. But he was confirmed in his belief that the disorganised condition of the Muslims had encouraged the Congress to ignore their demands.[9] He convened a Muslim all-parties conference in Delhi on 1 January 1929 and invited the Aga Khan to preside over it. The Aga Khan and the man around him expressed fear that the Hindus wanted to dominate the Muslims by sheer force of their numbers.[10] After a good deal of discussion and consultations with the Muslim leaders of various groups, Jinnah prepared the draft of a comprehensive resolution accommodating the divergent points of view. Its main points were federal constitution for India; uniform measure of autonomy for all provinces; at least one-third representation of Muslims in the central legislature; representation of communal groups on the basis of separate electorates; separation of Sind from the Bombay presidency; adequate safeguards for the protection and promotion of Muslim culture, educations, cabinets with at least one-third of the ministers being Muslims.[11]

The nationalist Muslims left the League for good, and formed a separate party, called the Nationalist Muslim Party in July 1929. The Muslim League became completely alienated from the Congress, and its leaders began to clamour for a 'separate homeland for the Muslims'. Thus, the efforts to draw up a constitution acceptable to all parties proved abortive.

The Calcutta Congress in 1928 was one of the important sessions of the national gathering in which Motilal Nehru declared, "I am for complete independence—as complete as it can be—but I am not against full Dominion Status—as full as any dominions possesses it today—provided I get it before it losses all attraction. I am for severance of British connection as it subsists with us today but am not against it as it exists with the Dominions...What matters to me is that Dominion

Status involves a very considerable measure of freedom bordering on complete independence and it any day preferable to complete dependence."[12]

On the invitation from the Viceroy, a deputation of Indian leaders consisting of Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru, M.A. Jinnah and Vithalbhai Patel met Lord Irwin on 23rd December 1929 to seek clarification of his proposals. In the discussion which was limited to the function of the proposed Round Table Conference in London, the Viceroy told them that any measure of unanimity at the conference would necessarily carry weight with the British opinion. The Congress leaders made it clear in the meeting that unless an assurance was given that the purpose of the conference was to draft a scheme for Dominion Status which the British Government would undertake to accept, there would be no possibility about their participation. But the Viceroy opined that the conference was desired to elicit the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals to be submitted to the parliament and expressed his inability to pre-judge the decision of the conference or to restrict the liberty of parliament.

Evidently, it was clear that the grant of Dominion Status was not the immediate goal of the British Government. In fact, His Majesty's Government were averse to using the phrase 'Dominion Status' to describe even the ultimate and remote goal of Indian political development. This exposed the hollowness of the diplomatically worded declaration of the Viceroy and the door was banged on the prospect of political settlement. Motilal Nehru's forebodings to Vithalbhai Patel that he did not expect any fruitful results from the interview with the Viceroy proved correct. From the Viceregal Lodge, Mahatma Gandhi and Motilal Nehru went straight to Lahore to attend the Congress session over which Jawaharlal Nehru was to preside.

The forty-fourth session of the Indian National Congress, held in Lajpat Nagar, on the banks of river Ravi at Lahore, in December 1929 was a momentous event in the history of India's greatest political organisation. In his presidential address, Jawaharlal Nehru dealt with a number of crucial problems facing the country the, outlined a programme of action, offered a masterly analysis of the world situation and gave full and candid expression to the central core of his ideas. While paying his tributes to Jatin Das[13] and Phongiji U. Wizaya,[14] he gave a 'hopeful note' of the birth of a new order in the Indian society. He stated that the old established ideas of liberty, justice, property and

even of the family were being criticised and the outcome hung in the balance. Europe, he opined, had ceased to be the centre of activity and interest, and the future lay with America and Asia. But he cautioned that the legions of Asia or Europe should no more 'overrun the contents.'[15]

The Congress president condemned bigotry and dogmatism in religion, and communalism in any shape or form. He deprecated the dependence of political or economic rights on the membership of religious group of community.[16] He felt sure that the time was not far off when these labels and appellations would have little meaning and when the Indian struggle would have an economic basis.[17] He did not approve of the validity of the All-parties Report and asked the people to put it aside in order to march forward unfettered and to achieve the new goal of *swarajaya.*[18] He was critical of the offers made by the British Government and the attitude of the Secretary of State in his speeches in the House of Commons. He further stated, "The offer that the British Government made was vague and there was no commitment or promise of performance....We must recognize Mr. Wedgwood Benn's desire to do something for India and his anxiety to secure the goodwill of the Indian people. But his speech and the other speeches made in Parliament carry us no further."[19]

The most significant aspect of presidential speech was the declaration of independence as the goal of the Indian National Congress. He was critical of the moderate and the middle-of-the-road policies. Indeed, his interpretation of independence was not the product of a narrow nationalism.[20] He repeated his-well opposition to Dominion Status, but characteristically, he did not rule out eventual friendship with Britian. He elaborated his idea' thus, "Independence for us means complete freedom from British domination and British imperialism....A great nation cannot be thwarted for long when once its mind is clear and resolved. If today we fail and tomorrow brings no success, the day after will follow and bring achievement."[21] In fact as early as 3rd November 1927, Nehru, in a note to the Congress Working Committee, pleaded for complete independence. "Independence was the right solution of the matter and the fact that we in Indian feared to claim it as our due was only a vivid illustration of our own mental degradation and of the injury that england had done to us."[22]

Nehru franky confessed that he was a socialist and a republican and was no believer in kings and princes. He recognised socialism as a

force which was gaining popularity all over the world, and the only way sought to end poverty and inequality in India was to adopt the creed of socialism.[23]

The programme for political and economic boycott was also enumerated in his speech. He would like India to refuse to accept responsibility for all the debts that England had piled on her. The complete boycott of the councils, the nonpayment of taxes, the boycott of foreign cloth and British goods—these continued the future programme which he clearly explained. He concluded by asking for peaceful and irresistible action and acting in a disciplined way. He felt sure that, "Success often comes to those who dare and act, it seldom goes to the timid who are even afraid of the consequences. We play for high stakes, and if we week to achieve great things it can only be through great danger."[24]

The Congress session at Lahore was Nehru's significant and remarkable success in national politics. It rocked his prestige over night and gave a tremendous boost to his phenomenal popularity with the masses. It raised his stature with the intelligentsia and made him a hero of India's youth. It brought him to the forefront of national politics, but it was not until the late thirties that he became factor to reckon within the counsel of the Congress. Indeed he delivered a powerful address proclaiming his ideals which were refreshingly new, being the product of the deep study of the systems of the west and the east. His address was at once an onslaught on British imperialism. Indian feudalism and capitalism. Through his resolutions, he committed the Congress to a new orientation towards the substance and implications of *swaraj.* His vision was an amalgam of western liberalism. Marxism and Gandhism. He wanted social transformation to be brought about in an ethical framework as laid down by Gandhi. The socialist winds, however gentle and moderate, were stirring people's minds, and drawing their attention to the inequalities of a system based on wealth, privilege and exploitation of the poor. "Capitalism having had its day, had reached the stage when it was time for it to retire in favour of socialism."[25] He felt that the acquisitive society which was the basis of capitalism was no longer suited to the present age.

Nehru believed in the reconstruction of Indian society because of the acute awareness of the poverty of the masses, their psychology of dependence, feudalism, traditionalism and superstition. He saw in

socialism the major instrument that would counter the aforesaid characteristics. He, therefore, felt the need of adopting the socialist methods and ideas for Indian conditions. In fact, his ideas of socialism began to take shape more or less through his sympathies towards communism. New Russia had an appeal for him almost from the beginning, though he did not approve of oppression and the wholesale regimentation. Besides, the poverty and misery amongst the masses with which he became well-acquainted in the twenties, engendered in him a socialist direction. During this period, he travelled a great deal and addressed many gatherings. He wanted to spread the ideology of socialism especially among Congress workers and the intelligentsia for these people who were the backbone of the national movement, thought barely in terms of the narrowest nationalism. In this background, Nehru pleaded for action like the Sinn Fien movement in Ireland or the Suffragettes in England—both of which had impressed him during his stay in England as a student.

The historic session ushered in a new era—an era which gave out a declaration of an all out war against the British Raj. A new zeal and patriotic fervour were generated amongst the people by the youthful president and other Congress leaders, and the whole country was electrified by the renovated ideology. There was no doubt much excitement but the final programme of the Civil Disobedience Movement was yet to be planned and evacuated at all-India level. It was indeed the reaction of the Congressmen and people in general that was to determine the future political programme and methodology of its operation.

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8

National Education[1]

I

The Indian papers to hand report that our publicists are engaged in a discussion of the question of "National Education" for India. The movement is led by some of the sincerest and most devoted leaders of the nationalist movement for Home Rule for India, and appears to be spreading. From the stray papers that I have received, I have not been able to find out the exact position of those who are reported to have struck a note of mild dissent, more by way of criticism than of opposition, but they given some idea of the position of those who are supporting it. Mrs. Besant has kindly mentioned my name as one of those who pioneered the movement in the Punjab, in the eighties of the last century.

It is quite true that I am one of these persons who raised the cry of "national education" in North India, so far back as 1883 A.D. and since then used it rather effectively for enlisting sympathy and collecting funds for the various institutions that were from time to time started to impart education in "National" lines. It is also obvious that the nationalism that we preached in those days was rather narrow and sectarian. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, was the first among the Indian leaders of thought in North India, who set afloat the idea of denominational education. The Christian institutions had led the way before him. The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh was a symbol of the new Muslim Nationalism which (Sir) Syed Ahmad Khan founded, educational in function, but political in scope and effect.

The Arya Samaj, representing the new nationalism of the Hindus, followed suit and the Dayanda Anglo-Vedic College, at Lahore, was the fruit of its efforts. Then came the movement of the Central Hindu College at Benares upon which has now been erected the superstructure

of the Hindu University. The Mohammedan College at Aligarh, the Arya College at Lahore, the Hindu College at Benares, all embodied the "National" ideals of their founders limited and sectarian as they were, at the time. Each professed to provide its own kind of national education. The educational facilities provided by these institutions were open to persons of all creeds, denominations and religions, but the nationalism aimed at was undisguisedly denominational. Each institution created an atmosphere of its own-national to a certain extent, so far as the general cult of love of mother-country was concerned but otherwise openly sectarian.

The education imparted in these institutions, as distinguished from the ordinary State-owned schools and colleges, was "national" only in so far as it helped the creation of the denominational atmosphere aimed at by its promulgators. The Muslim College and the Hindu Colleges all professed to enforce and encourage the study of the vernaculars and their sacred languages, but the emphasis all the time was on the University course and the University examinations. The scheme of studies promulgated by the official University course and the University examinations. The scheme of studies promulgated by the official Universities was accepted unreservedly, except in the additions that were made to the courses in Hindi and Urdu, Sanskrit and Arabic. The principal business of the staffs engaged was to prepare students for University examinations. The results achieved in these examinations were the measure of their success and popularity. In the two Colleges in the United Provinces, the leading positions on the staff were reserved for Europeans. Special efforts, were no doubt made in each institution to inoculate the students with the serum of the narrow nationalism which had inspired its founders. Subscriptions were raised and endowments made for the dissemination of religion, for the encouragement of the study of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. Some attempts were so made to encourage original research in the literatures and records that existed in these languages, with a view to prop up the several interpretations that the founders and the managers put upon their respective religions and their histories; but their success achieved in this line was, in each case, dubious and almost imperceptible I can speak more definitely of the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College, at Lahore, with the management of which I was intimately associated for about a quarter of a century. For over nine years I was the general secretary of the governing body, and for several years its Vice-President. I hope I shall not be charged

with vanity if I say that for twenty-five years I gave the best in me to the institution—grudged neither time nor money, nor energy in doing all that I could to ensure its success and progress. My duties were by no means confined to field and office-work (running the office), addressing public meetings, collecting funds, raising subscriptions, doing publicity work, conducting and writing in periodicals, etc., but included the association with the staff and the students and the supervision of the different departments, particularly the boarding house.

It is with immense pleasure and pride that I look back upon that period of my life. It was a rare privilege to associate and co-operate with men of character and calibre of Hansraj, Lalchand, Dwarka Dass, Ishwar Dass, and others, too numerous to be mentioned here. The spirit was denominational and sectarian no doubt, but there was hardly anything of meanness or pettiness, or jealousy in it. Even their sectarianism was of an exalted kind, the Country the Motherland-had always the uppermost plea in their affections. They were all inspired by a spirit of genuine and disinterested patriotism and altruism. Their methods were clean and above board. It was joy to work with them.

Of all the schemes of national education promulgated till then, theirs was probably the first to include in their educational programme the idea of "Swadeshi". The original prospectus of the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College was remarkable for these things: (a) the emphasis it laid in bridging the gulf between the educated classes and the uneducated masses; (b) in emphasizing the necessity of technical education in arts and industries, which would make the future leaders of the country, independent of State service; and (c) in insisting that their scheme of national education should be absolutely independent of government partonage and government help.

Looking back on the record of the institution for the last thirty-two years of its life, giving all possible credit to the founders and the manners and the leaders thereof, for the best of intentions, the best of efforts and the best of everything. I regret to say that failure in their principal alms, written and unwritten, is writ large on it. Let me guard against misunderstanding. There is no man in India for whom I have greater respect than Hansraj, the Founder President of the Arya College, nor another body of men in the whole country towards I entertain feelings of greater respect, regard, and reverence than the past and present managers of the Dayananda College. The spirit of self sacrifice and national service, shown by Hansraj and his pupils is almost unique,

and worthy of the highest praise. The work done by them deserves all credit. The tiny bark of high education in the Punjab was rescued by this college at the time of its greatest danger. The spirit of public service in the land of the five rivers owes an immeasurable debt to the little band of workers who brought the college into existence and have run it since. Considering the positions and resources of the men who conceived the ideal and worked hard to make it a success, considering the general air of all round suspicion and distrust in which they lived and worked, the story of the financial and educational success of the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore, is nothing short of a romance.

The Muslim college at Aligarh, and the Hindu College at Benares, were both started under better auspices, blessed with the smiles of the leading aristocracy of their respective communities, and with the good will of the ruling authorities. The Arya College had none of these advantages. It was founded, managed, and run for a long time in defiance of both. Yet it must be owned that in solving the problems of national education, the Arya College at Lahore has been as conspicuous a failure as the other institutions started with similar objects in other parts of the country. Prior to the foundation of the National College, in Bengal, the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College, at Lahore, was the only institution in the country which could even by a stretch of imagination and language, lay and claim to being called "national" in the sense in which the word was understood then. The Fergusson College is named after a foreigner, and with the exception of the spirit of self-sacrifice of its founder, directors, and teachers, had no other claim to be distinguished from the ordinary State College. The Aligarh College and the Benares College both have had all the time, foreigners on their staff, and have, besides, in conjunction with the Fergusson College at Poona, been almost regularly in receipt of State aid, thus subjecting practically the whole of their policy to government control. Not that fact necessarily makes them denationalised, but that it reduces their claim to any great distinction from the ordinary State-managed institutions.

Besides the institutions mentioned above, there are some others also which claim to impart National education and which have been founded for that purpose. One of them is the Gurukula Academy at Hardwar, founded by L. Munshi Ram and his party. The Gurukula, too, is a sectarian institution. Otherwise it certainly has a greater claim to being "national" than any of the others mentioned previously. It is an institution, founded, managed, staffed, and financed by Indians only.

In its curriculum it gives the first place to Indian languages. It is more in conformity with the sprite of Hinduism than the College at Lahore, or the Central Hindu College at Benares. It takes no notice of the official University courses or the University examinations. It enforces a discipline which is more truly national than anything done in the other institutions.

All that has been said about the spirit of self-sacrifice of those who founded the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College is applicable to it in its entirety. Yet I am afraid it is no more national than any of the others.

Another institution of almost the same kind is the Tagore School at Bolpur. It does not profess to impart high education, and is a one-man institution. There may be some other institutions which claim to provide national education, with whose origin and history I am not acquainted. If so, I beg to be pardoned for not noticing them. It is not my purpose to give a complete list of "national" schools and colleges. The object is to notice some typical efforts and make a retrospective review.

The only effort of this kind which was, in my judgement, truly national, was that made by the National Council of Education in Bengal, under the imputes of the Swadeshi and boycott movements. The scheme of the National Council was free from the sectarian tinge of the Upper India movements; it took no notice of denominational nationalism; it took ample cognizance of the economic needs of the country as a whole, and it frankly recognized the necessity of ignoring the official University curriculum, on the one hand, and of State aid on the other. It aimed at National consolidation and national independence. It was a direct challenge to the government and the government accepted it wholeheartedly. What came of it is known to everybody and need not be stated here. It failed, as it was bound to do, because it came into conflict with the State,-not of course, of its own seeking.

The National Council of Education still exists, but only in name. Its condition is moribund. The leaders and officers themselves have strangulated it. Taraknath Palit and Rash Bihari Ghosh, two of its greats pillars, gave it a death-blow when they handed over their magnificent endowments to the Calcutta University, instead of to the National Council of Education, founded and led by them. The few scholars who, with characteristic self-sacrifice, gave up careers to give instruction to the students of the National College, are almost all dispersed. They are seeking appointments in Government and aided institutions. The

Nationalist schools, started by the Council, have (most of them) been disintegrated by the force of circumstances, and at the present moment the movement is nothing but a dilapidated and discarded landmark in the educational progress of the country.

The only institution that are still in existence and prospering are the denominational ones. The D.A.V. College[2] at Lahore and the M.A.O. College at Aligarh, are thriving and a source of joy to their founders. They follow the policy of least, or no resistance. The D.A.V College, which was under suspicion ever since its birth, has more or less gained the confidence of the rulers by a radical change in its policy, and the reins of the Mohammedan College at Aligarh are held tightly by the government. The Benares College is an independent University which enjoys both the confidence and the control of the government. The Gurukula at Kangri, is virtually the only institution that is really independent of government control. It was under a cloud for a long time, until Sir James Meston and Lord Hardinge put upon it the sal of their approbation. I think the same might be said of Tagore school at Bolpur.

Now I do not mean to insinuate even by implication that these institutions have not been educationally useful to the national, or that their managers or leaders were not actuated by the nest of motives. The remarks that I have about the Arya Samaj institutions apply, with equal force, to almost all these institutions. They are without exception, monuments of the *patriotism* and public spirit of their founders and managers, and far be it from me to make any reflection on them.

Yet I cannot help repeating once more, that they have not, except by their failure, made any substantial contribution toward the solution of the problem of "national" education. I want the leaders of the new movement to realize that fully, and to keep it in mind in formulating their new scheme. I, for one, do not believe in living in a fools' paradise. The first thing is to clear our minds of cant, and have a clear conception of what we mean by national education.

II

I have before me three pronouncements on "Nataional education"; one by Mrs. Annie Besant,[3] the other by Mr. B.G. Tilak and the third by Sir Rash Behari Ghose. Of these, Mrs. Besant's is perhaps the only one which embodies idea on the subject. I say this without any disrespect to the others. I will, therefore, consider that one first.

Says Mrs. Besant

"Noting can more swiftly emasculate national life, nothing can more surely weaken national character, than allowing the education of the young to be controlled by foreign influences, to be dominated by foreign ideals. From 1895, onwards, I have ventured to urge on the Indian people that the education which was given to their sons was denationalising and despiritualising. Foreign habits, foreign manners, foreign dress, foreign ways are all enforced in a foreign language, with, in missionary schools, a foreign religion to boot, sterilising the boy's heart, and despiritualising his whole nature. It is any wonder that the national spirit decayed, until a vigorous effort was made to capture education by Munshi Ram. Hansraj (and others mentioned in article I)?"

Coming to the constructive side of the problem, Mrs. Besant propounds the question "what must our national education be," and then answer it in the following terms:

(1) It must be controlled by Indians, shaped by Indians, carried on by Indians. It must hold up *Indian ideals of devotion, wisdom, and morality, and must be permeated by the Indian religious spirit* rather than fed on the letter of the creeds. That spirit is spacious, tolerant, all embracing, and recognises that man goes to God along many roads and that all the prophets came from him.

(2) National education must live in an atmosphere of proud and glowing patriotism, and this atmosphere must be kept sweet, fresh, and bracing by the study of Indian literature, Indian history, Indian triumphs in science, in art, in politics, in war, in colonisation, in manufactures, in trade, in commerce. The Arthashastra must be studied as well as the Dharmashastra, science and politics as well as religion.

(3) National Education must not be separated from the homes of the Nation. The ideals, the interests, the principles, the emotions of the one must be those of the other. For the Nation is built out of families, and the present opposition between the home and the school must cease. The teachers in school and college must work in harmony with the teachers in the home.

(4) National education must meet the national temperament at every point, and develop the national character. India is not to become a lesser-nor even a greater—England, but to

> evolve into a mightier India. British ideals are good for Britain, but it is India's that are good for India. We do not want echoes nor monotones; we want a choral melody of nations, mirroring the varied qualities of Nature and of God. Shall Nature show but a single colour, and trees and flowers, and mountains, and sky wear but a single hue? Harmonious variety and not monotony is the mark of perfection.

"Away from all apologies for India, with all deprecatory explanations of India's ways and customs, and traditions. India is herself, and needs not to be justified; for verily, God has evolved no greater, no more exquisite nationality than India's among all the broken reflections of His own perfect beauty."

The language of this pronouncement is dear to the heart of every Nationalist. It is spirited and stimulating as well, as ennobling and encouraging. As a piece of rhetoric, it is exquisite. I have often used similar language, and with good results. I may use it again if occasion demands it. We, Indians owe a great debt of gratitude to Mrs. Besant, for her activities in connection with the Theosophical Society, and the Central Hindu College at Benares. Our obligations to her have grown immensely, both in volume and intensity by her lead and interest in the Home Rule Movement. Consequently, anything that comes from her must received our careful and respectful consideration. Yet these facts make it all the more incumbent upon us not to hesitate to say "we differ", when, after a careful and respectful consideration, we do differ from her. I am certain that she does not want us to follow her blindly. She lays no claim to infallibility.

Indian publicists have a duty to perform. They are planning the future of their nation, which is at present moment in a state of transition and is undergoing a process of transformation. So much depends on education.

Education is the most vital question for us. It is the most important of all our problems. In a way it is the *fundamental problem.* We cannot afford to have loose and confused ideas about education, the aims and ends of education, and the methods of education. Our whole future hinges on it. It behoves us, therefore, to devote all the mental energy, which we possess, to the right understanding and the right solution thereof. It would not do to be carried away by prejudices and mere sentimentality. The decision must be arrived at by deep, careful and

critical consideration of the whole question. A hastily arrived at decision, or one that is founded on prejudice and sentimentality, may materially hinder our progress or, at any rate, slow down the rate of progress.

The national mind is just now in a fluid condition. It needs wise and thoughtful guidance. Tendencies created, prejudices reared, sentiments disseminated, when they go deep into the psychology of the nation, are difficult to uproot. To create national tendencies, sentiments, prejudices, impressions, and preferments in haste, under the idea that they can be corrected, later, when found to be wrong, involves so much waste of energy and opportunity that no wise leader ought to do it light-heartedly. This essay is only a plea for careful, critical consideration, as well as broad, thoughtful planning. There is no intention to indulge in pity of destructive criticism, nor to pose as an oracle.

III

Firstly, we should come to clear understanding of what our national ideals are. Do we want to be an integral part of the "civilized world", making our contribution to its progress, by thought and action, or do we want to be an isolated national unity, happy in our retirement and isolation? Or course, we want political liberty, economic independence, social solidarity and religious freedom; but for what ends? Are these things ends in themselves or only means to some other and higher ends? If so, what is that end?

Some will say that salvation is the ultimate and we desire. But what is meant by "salvation"? Is the Nirvand[4] of Buddhism, the merging of the individual soul in the supreme soul of the *vedanta*[5] the temporary bliss of the Arya Samaj, the *Mukti*[6] of the Christian, or the paradise of the orthodox Moslem? Or are these after all only delusions? The real salvation lies in freedom from misery, poverty, disease, ignorance and slavery of any kind, in this life, now and here for ourselves, and hereafter for our successors. There are religions which enjoin on their followers the duty of suffering all the pangs of misery, poverty, disease ignorance and slavery, in order to have the certainty of bliss and happiness hereafter in the life to come. In fact this is more of less the tendency of all religions which have been systematised.

From the earnestness, which all classes of Indians are displaying in fighting out misery, poverty, disease, ignorance and slavery, it appears that they have made up their minds on the one question at least,

whatever be the ultimate salvation, *mukti or nijat*[7] *or nirvana*. Our people do not want misery, poverty, disease, ignorance and slavery either for themselves or for this children. Hindus (*Sanatanists, Arya Samajists, Brahmo Samajists, Vedantists* and others). Moslems, Christians, all are agreed on this point. Everyone is trying to explain his own dogma or creed, in such a way as to make a pursuit of happiness in this world by the righteous acquisition of wealth and health and knowledge, a desirable end. The natural bent of the human mind is also in the same direction. But priests, prophets and reformers are not dead, nor do they show any signs of death. They are just hiding their heads and biding their time. With the least encouragement and stimulus they come out into the open and start their poisonous propaganda.

Vairagya,[8] a life of renunciation and poverty, is still the ostensible goal of every religion. *Sannyasis,*[9] Dervishes and Monks, are still our ideals among men. Even the most rational and liberal-minded reformer respects and reverses them. Men of religion we call them, and hence our instinctive, impulsive, deep-rooted sentiment in their favour. What is worse is that some modern educated men, who are neither priests nor monks, and who in most cases do not themselves lead a life of asceticism, are holding up the same ideal for their younger countrymen.

Every religion contains some beautiful and sublime principles which save its followers from utter annibilation in the struggle for life, be it individual or social, but the bulk of every religion's teaching and its literature as ordinarily understood, lays emphasis on the negation of life, as distinguished from its assertion and intensification.

Higher Hindu religion teachers that salvation lies in *gnan*[10] (knowledge), not mere knowledge but realised knowledge. It insists that those those inspite to this kind of knowledge, must live a full life, albert a controlled life, before they can acquire that kind of *gnan*. They must do their full duty to society and learn all that has to be learnt by social amenities, relations and sensations. They they can renounce certain phases of life, in favour of certain others. A vow of poverty did not in ancient times involve an exaltation of poverty over wealth, but only freedom from the obligations of property at a certain stage of one a life. In fact, the most ancient literature of the Hindus makes no mention except by fair fetched implication of *Sannyasis*. All the great *Rishis*[11] and *Munis*[12] of the past had property, as well as families. They preferred to live away from crowds only for purposes of research, for *Yoga*

Samaddhi,[13] and concentration of mind on the problems of life. That condition was not an end in itself, but a social means for a social end.

It was not a desire of *Mukti* alone that led them to do it, but the very social and admirable desire of helping humanity but personal solution of the problems of life. Look now his ideal was regarded in later times, until we came too exalt a life of *meretya*[14] (renunciation) as such, and to place it at the tope of life's edifice, as a goal, and end and a lighthouse. It is true the whole nation never practised it, but that was because it impossible to do so. As many people as wished to adopt it, did adopt it, until we find that today a good part of the nation having abandoned all productive economic work, engaged itself in preaching the virtues of *Sadhuism,* and in making the people believe that nest to becoming a *Sadhu*[15] himself, the best thing for a man to do to avoid damnation is to feed and maintain *Sadhus.*

I am afraid what I have said of Hindusism is also more or less true of Mahammadanism and Christianity. So deep rooted is the sentiment, that even inconclastic reforming agencies like the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Vivekananda direction. The hymns and songs and prayers are still brainful of that spirit. At the time when English education began to be imparted in India, this fatal tendency towards the negation of life, was a substantial part of our national character. We may defend our respective religions against the charge of having actively taught this negation as an ideal but we cannot with any honesty deny the fact of the prevalence of this spirit to an alarming extent among our people. Nor can we conceal, that more or less the whole of our literature breathes this tendency. We may call it an addition of degenerate times, but there it is. No one reading that literature can evade the subtle influence of this tendency which pervades it. Our Epics are the most human documents we possess, yet, even they are full of that spirit.

Now it must be owned that the present awakening, the protest against this tendency, owes its birth to foreign education, however godless it may have been. Sometimes I feel thankful for its being godless. But for this education there may nave been no awakening or, to be more accurate. the awakening might have been indefinitely delayed. To my mind the first need of India is the absolute destruction of this tendency. This tendency is the fundamental basis of all our national weakness. Chiristianity, too, has that tendency and if the Christian nations had stuck too true Christianity, they would have made no progress at all. It

is not Christianity that has produced the modern improvements in life. Progress in Europe has been made in spite of Christianity. The most important work before us, then, is to change the general psychology of our people in this respects; to create in them an interest, a zeal in real life.

The general prevailing idea of life in India is that of a necessary evil. That life itself is a misery, and a misfortune from which it is desirable to escape is so deeply written on the souls of our people, that it is not easy to efface it. What India needs is an earnest, widely spread persistent or enjoyed, is not so obvious to our people as it should be. Not that the Indians do not value living; not that they have no respect for life as such, nay in fact some of them care for mere life, so much as to preserve inferior lives even at the sacrifice or the deteriment of human life. The vast bulk of them prefer mere living to honourable living.

The ancient Hindus seem to have had a clear idea of the amount of energy that had been expended by the race in the evolution of man. The idea is so deep rooted that every Hindu rustic will tell you what a privilege it is to be born a human being. So far he is all right. The trouble begins when he starts to consider the aim of life. As to that, he is being told, day in and day out, that supreme merit lies in killing desire, in escaping from the life of senses so as to escape from the pain of re-birth. This necessarily leads him to shun life, to belittle it, and eventually to escape from it, if he can. I admit that this is a perversion of the original doctrine, and that there is not sufficient sanction for it in the ancient Hindu scripture but then that is the prevailing belief which finds ample support and justification from the language of the sacred books. The first aim of a national system of education should be to destroy this belief. This cannot be achieved by a premonition and perpetuation of that literature in its present form, which is overfall of this false view of life's aim. Personally I have a great affection for the Sanskrit language and the literature contained in it, but in my judgement any attempt to make it a medium of general education and uplift is bound to fall and deserves to fail.

Its value for the purposes of historic research is obvious. Its aid to enrich the vocabulary of our vernaculars is indispensable. Its cultivation for purposes of scholarship may be assured, but its use for the practical purposes of life of the ordinary citizen is more than problematic.

Arabic and Persian are more advantageously placed in this respect than Sanskrit. Sanskrit occupies the same position in India, which Greek

and Latin occupy in Europe. Sensible Europe is dropping the study of the latter, except for the limited few who aspire to a career of literature and India will have to do the same if she wants her children to employ their time and energy in the solution of the practical problems of life.

The attempt to live in the past is not only futile but even foolish; what we need to take care of is the future. If India of the future is to live a full, healthy and vigorous life commensurate with the importance which belongs to it, by virtue of its human and other resources, it must come into more close touch with the rest of he world. If it is to occupy its rightful place among the nations of the globe, it must make the most profitable and the most effective use of its intellectual, mental and general human potentialities.

Sanskrit is a perfect language, having a great record of valuable literature, and so are Latin and Greek. They are all sisters. Just as Europe and America are discovering that for the ordinary body, not aiming to devote his life to literary or historical research, the study of Greek and Latin may be profitably displaced by the study of the other modern languages, so will the Hindus have to do.

That, intelligent Hindus already realise that, is proved by their conduct. My personal experience (of the last 36 years in connection with the D.A.V. College) justify may saying that of all those who founded the D.A.V. College and afterwards nursed it with energy and devotion, there were and are only a few who ever wanted their own children to follow the courses of Sanskrit which they prescribed for others. Of these, perhaps there are still fewer, whose sons are using their knowledge of Sanskrit for any effective purpose. Some of them have given up all study of Sanskrit and consider the time spent in acquiring it as lost. Of all those pious donors, who make endowments for popularising the study of Sanskrit or for imparting religious instruction in creeds and forms, There are very few who make their own sons and nephews devote much of their time to either.

Personally I yield to none in my respect for the ancient Aryans. I am as proud as any one else of their achievements. The advanced human knowledge to an extent that has made it possible for the moderns to advance. I am proud of their wisdom, their spirituality, their ethics and their literary achievements, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that in knowledge the world has since then advanced much further. And if knowledge is wisdom, then we must presume also that the world is wiser today than it was 3,000 years ago.

That advanced knowledge and its resultant wisdom is at present embodied in foreign languages. Every year, every month, nay, every day in the year, it is making further progress. So much so, that a book dealing with sciences becomes almost out of date, within a year, unless a new edition is produced with up-to-date improvements. No one who does not want to fall behind, can afford to neglect these sciences, which can only be studied effectively for a number of years, at least, in these foreign languages.

Besides, it should not be forgotten that modern scientific inventions, including the use of steam and electricity for transportation purposes have destroyed the barriers of space and distance. No nation, however spiritually inclined in its standards and values of life, can live a life of isolation, even if she desired to do so. Intercourse with other nations for purposes of trade and commerce is no longer optional. It is compulsory. If India's trade and commerce is be carried on by Indians, and not by foreigners, and if the Indian people are to profit therefrom, it is necessary that our traders and commercial men should know as many modern languages as may be possible for them to acquire first in school, and then out of it. The bulk of the nation must be engaged in agriculture or manufacture or business. For all these purposes a knowledge of the modern languages is almost a necessity. Under these circumstances to common boys to devote a entertainment of their school time preparatory to entering life, in studying a complicated difficult ancient language like Sanskrit is such a flagrant misuse of energy that it is bound to harm the general efficiency of the nation if we persist in that course. So, it is high time that the national should make up its mind that like other luxuries the study of Sanskrit is for the few and not for the many. Sanskrit must be studied by the few for the purpose of research, and culture and for helping the national in enriching the vocabulary of the vernaculars. For the many, the study of foreign modern languages must be insisted on, accompanied by a good knowledge of the modern languages of India. In intend to say something more on this subject later. At present I am making these remarks only to clear the ground for the consideration of what would be the aim and scope of any national system of education for India.

Descending from national literature to national methods of education, I must say at once that it will be a folly to review the latter. They are out of date, and antiquated. To adopt them will be a step backward and not forward.

The present school system is atrocious, and there is not doubt that the ancient system was in certain respects (mark in certain repeats only) much better. The system actually followed at the time of the introduction of British rule, had lost the best features of the more ancient one. We are mightly glad, that the system then prevalent was rejected in favour of the Western school system. The emaculation which has resulted from the latter, would have been greater and much worse. If the former had received the sanction of the State and been adopted.

The subject is so vast and complicated, that it is impossible to discuss it at any length here, but one cannot make himself fully intelligible without making some more observations on the point.

The ancient system which emphasised the personal relationship of the *Guru*[16] and the *Chela*[17] was good in certain respects and harmful in others. The personal relationship supplied the human element which is now missing. This was a guarantee of greater attention being paid to the formation of habits which compose character. On the other hand it had a *tendency* of enslaving the pupil's mind. The aim of education should be to qualify the educated to think and act for himself with a due sense of responsibility toward society. Did the *Gurukula*[18] system achieve this? In my judgement, it could not. the very oath administered to the *Brahmechari* and the benediction administered by the *Guru,* if properly analysed, will show that the ideal was to reproduce the *Guru* in the person of the *Chela.* The aim of every parent and every teacher should be to enable their children and pupils, to be greater and better persons, than mere copies of themselves. I shall be glad to be corrected if I am mistaken in this belief. The discipline enforced was too strict; too mechanical and too empirical. The religion taught was too formal, rigid and narrow. A disproportionate amount to time was devoted to the memorizing the rules of grammar and texts. It seems that the relations between the teacher and pupils were possibly freer in the time of the *Upanishads* than in the period or the codes. The system inculcated in the codes is a system of iron and fire.

It was not peculiar to India. The Arabs, the Greeks, the Latins also had similar systems.

The fact that in spite of these drawbacks, the Hidus, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs and the Catholic Christian institutions of medieval Europe produced so many eminent scholars, philosophers and jurists is in any way proof of their excellence. It only established the

capacity of the human mind to transcend its environments and to rise above the limitations imposed on it by authority, be the authority that of the parent, the Guru or the State.

The *Gurukula* academy at Hardwar has attempted to remove some of these defects but I am not quite sure that the segregation insisted on in that institution, was ever so complete in the ancient times as it represented to be. The names implies, that the pupil lived with his *Guru* as an adopted member of the latter's family. In every way he was treated as a child of the family. In that case, the number that each *Guru* could take must have been extremely limited. There must have been larger *Ashrams*[20] and *Parishads*[21] too, where a number of Gurus co-operated in teaching and training large number of pupils, but whether these *Ashramas* and *Parishads* insisted on the pupils being so completely cut away form society in general is problematic. At any rate the pupils had daily opportunities to see and talk to women, whey they went for *Bidlesha* (alms).[22]

I am extremely doubtful if the style of education advocated in the Codes, was ever followed universally. I have reasons to think, that it was mainly devised for the children of the Brahmins. However, be that as it may, I have no doubt, that it is impossible to be re-introduced as a part of the general scheme of education in India of today. I am also positive that it is detrimental to the sort of character we want to develop, nay we must develop in our boys and girls, if we are to keep pace with the rest of the world, in the march onward. Our boys and girls must not be brought up in hot houses. They should be brought up in the midst of the society of which they are to be members. They should form habits and learn manners which will enable them to rise to every emergency. They should learn to rise above temptations and not shun them. The world is a "temptation". It is a place to enjoy so long as by doing it one does not injure onself and others. So long as one is loyal to the society in which his lot has been cast and towards which he had social obligations, one commits no sin, by taking to the pleasures of life in a moderate degree.

Boys and girls must learn their social obligations, when in their teens. To segregate them at such a time is to deprive them of the greatest and the best opportunity of their lives, localities far away from the battle of city life and from the temptations incidental to it, is an old ideal which is being abandoned by the best educational thinkers of the world. The new idea is to let the boys and girls be surrounded by the conditions of

life in which they have to move and which they have to meet in after life. To let boys and girls grow in isolations, ignorant of the conditions of actual life, innocent of the social amenities of life, which no experience of the sudden demands and emergencies of group life is to deprive them of the most valuable element in their education. The aim of education is to fit men and women for the battle of life. We do not want to convert them into archerites and ascetics. The boys and girls of today are the citizens of tomorrow. Form among them must come our statesmen, administrators, generals, inventors, captains of industry and manufacturers, as much as, our philosophers and thinkers and teachers. Even sound thinking to be useful for practical purposes of life must be based on a full knowledge of the different phases of social life. All life is social. We are beginning to realize, that the best social thinkers of the world have been those who were brought up in the full blaze of the social conditions of the time and who had personal experience of how men in general lived and how they acted and reached on each other.

In my judgment, it is not a sound idea to make an anchorite of a boy or a girl. Boys and girls should have every opportunity of seeing life, moving in life, experiencing the shocks and reactions of life. Boys brought up in isolation and girls brought up in Purdah[23] make very poor men and women. Often they have been seen succumbing to the first temptation they came across. They wreck their lives from want of experience and want of nerve. I am speaking from actual experience. Not that men educated in ordinary schools and colleges are always better; but that at least the former have not shown any superiority in handling situations which arise of being thrown into social conditions to which they were strangers before. My experience justifies me in saying that the former go to greater extremes, in laxity of character and looseness of behaviour than the former. They lack the power of adjustment. It is my desire to impress upon my countrymen with all the earnestness I possess, and with all the emphasis I can lay, the absolute desirability of giving up the antiqiuated ideal of bringing up boys and girls in an atmosphere of isolation. Boys and girls should be treated more as comrades, rather than dependence and inferiors and slaves. We should extend to them our fullest confidence and encourage absolute frankness in them. Instead of keeping the sexes away we should bring them together. In my judgement greater harm is done by keeping them apart than by bringing them together. I know I am treading on delicate ground. Prejudice and sentiment accumulated by centuries of

restricted life is all against it. The thing will come by degrees. But come it must and come it will.

It will be so much waste of energy not to profit by the experience of other peoples. Our ideas of morality and decency must undergo change. Our boys and girls must grow in an atmosphere of frankness, freedom and mutual confidence. Away with suspicion and distrust. It breeds pocrisy, sycophancy and disease. The future teachers and *Gurus* of India must learn to set aside the tone of command and authority to which they have hitherto been accustomed. The boys and girls are not clay in their hands, to be moulded into patterns of their choice. That was a stupid idea, if ever it existed. They are living beings, product of nature, heredity, and environments. They throb with the same impulses and desires and ideas as we do. These impulses and desires require state guidance. They cannot be regulated by me authority, or mainly by authority, without inflicting awful injury on their manhood and womanhood. We command them to do things, of the righteousness and value of which they have not been convinced. The result is a habit of slavish submission to authority. I recognize that we cannot perhaps eliminate the element of command altogether from the education and bringing up of boys and girls. They must, *sometimes,* be protected from themselves. But the command should be the last step, taken with reluctance and out of a sense of unavoidableness which comes by having otherwise failed to arouse an intelligent understanding in the child. Parents and teachers must learn to respect the child and to have a feeling of reverence for it. No Japanese ever strikes a child, yet the Japanese children are models of reasonable. The Japanese maintain an attitude of respect towards their children. They treat the children as their equals and always address them as such. They never criticise them. The use of the rod is absolutely unknown in Japanese homes. Harsh language towards children or an expression of anger is very rare. The Japanese code of life is very strict in certain respects. It exacts strict obedience and strict discipline from every citizen. Japanese soldiers have earned a name for their high sense of duty and for strict discipline, but that comes more out of a traditional level for the country and its sovereign, than by enforcing authority and penalties in childhood. In short the system that stresses the authority of the teacher or the parent, which is based on a suspicion of human nature and human tendencies, which is distrustful of childhood and youth, which is openly out for control and discipline and subordination, which favours empirical methods of

pedagogy, which tax no respect for the instincts of the boy and the girls is not an ideal system to produce self reliant, aggressive (in order to be progressive), men and women that new India wants. I come to the conclusion, therefore, that any widespread revival of the ancient or medieval systems of education is unthinkable. It will take us centuries backward and I am certain that the country will not adopt it. Mrs. Besant of course does not advocate it. But I know that there are groups of people in India who are in left with that system. They are sometimes carried away by a partial praise of certain features of their system, by eminent foreigners and educationists. A system may be "fascinating", without being sound. It may be highly interesting as an experiment. It may be good for Governmental purposes, yet harmful from the citizens' point of view. It may be good for producing certain types but harmful if adopted for the national as a whole. I would beg of my countrymen not to be carried off their feet, by the praises which the foreigner, Sometimes bestows on our literature and on our system, some of them do so, out of the disgust with their own systems of life. They do not wait to make proper comparisons, but rush from one extreme to another others only mean to pay a generous compliment. Some perhaps mean mischief. We should not be affected wither by their praise or by their condemnation. We are in a critical period of our life, and it behoves us to weight things in their true perspective, before laying down policies and making plans for constructive upbuilding of the nation. What is required is a sober study of the situation before making plans.

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6. Salvation.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Life of renunciation.
9. Saint.
10. Knowledge.
11. Saint.

12. Saint.
13. Prayer.
14. Non-possession.
15. A religion person, non-possessive.
16. Religious teacher.
17. Follower.
18. An educational institution.
19. An unmarried person.
20. Institution of non-possessive inmates.
21. Organisation.
22. Alms given to saints.
23. Veil-custom among women.

9

A Fight for Crumbs

The following is a reprint of the Pamphlet by Lala Lajpat Rai issued by the India Home Rule League, 1400, Broadway, New York City.

One of the biggest evils of an alien rule is the tendency for dependence that it creates in the subject people, which naturally leads to divisions and differences over the distribution of crumbs, which fall from his master's table. When Lord Morley introduced his reforms in 1909 he planned to crush the advanced nationalists by taking the moderates under his wings. He gave a few posts to the latter, and gave a few others the opportunity of prefixing "honourable" to their names. Now Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford are playing the same game. Be it said to their credit, however, that they are doming it in a more masterly way than Lord Morley ever did. Morley was lacking in courage. Having been a theorist all his life he knew how to write, but had not the courage to put his principles into practice, Master of words, he was not quite a success as a doer of deeds. His statesmanship, if one may call it such, was a devoid of faith as well as of imagination. Montagu, however, is in certain respects rising to the heights of statesmanship. But even then he has to go slow and haltingly. He cannot defy vested interests, nor ignore the Junker element in Parliament and the country. Yet, in twelve months he has done more in the way of rallying the moderates than Morley did in five years. He has been giving appointment after appointment to the Moderates and has completely won them over to his side. Perhaps the war created the occasion. Besides, he has the support of the Viceroy as well as the advantage of the world changes in his favour. Yet making due allowance for these, one cannot but put him above Morley in his attempt to effect far-reaching reforms in the administration of India. This, however, is only by the way.

We have started by commencing on the fight for crumbs, which is the natural result of an alien rule. We find it fully illustrated in the

present political struggle that is proceeding in India. In Lord Morley's time the Indian Nationalists were divided into two classes, the so called Moderates and the so called Extremists. Now it is said that there are four moderates and ultra-moderates, extremists and ultra-extremists. We have carefully studying the pronouncements of all and anxiously watching the developments. The splits and differences and recriminations do not frighten us. In fact, they add to our spirits. Head indicates life. Friction is not *always* bad. Peace at any price is not always good. *Life is the real thing and not,* peace and quiet. We have been taught, to love peace and quiet more than life, and that has brought about our downfall. The differences in the Nationalist camp indicate active thought, active life and struggle. We are happy over this indication. But we have to guard against their not being turned to destructive ends.

What makes us feel sorry is that so much feeling should be injected into matters which ought to be discussed on broad lines. We are more angry with the Moderates for the simple reason that they made such exaggerated claims for patience, experience, sobriety, statesmanship, past services and sacrifices, and yet are the loudest in denunciation and in shedding tears. We have many friends among them whom we revere and love and for whom we have the highest respect. We have absolutely no doubt of their sincerity honesty and patriotism, but we cannot concede that they have the monopoly of these, or even of wisdom and sagacity. What perplexes us even more is that we cannot see any very radical differences between the respective political aspirations of the various parties. Of course, differences there are, but are they so material as to justify all the heart and passion that is being introduced into the discussions over the Reform Scheme? Do they deserve all the froth and foam that is being generated on both sides? Why have the Moderates seceded from the Congress? Why could they not stay in a minority, even for a year? The so called Extremists have been in a minority for years.

Reverting to the Reform Scheme, we notice a substantial agreement that the Government Scheme is not satisfactory, and that it lacks essentials. All parties contend that it concedes practically no power to the people in the Central Government, and in that respect is very defective. All insist that it must be modified on certain definite lines, giving almost the same power to the elected representatives of the people in the Central Government as is conceded in the provincial governments. The quarrel is mainly over words and details. One party calls the scheme "unsatisfactory and disappointing". The Moderates object to the use of

these words. They do not want a definite period being fixed for the grant of full home rule, while the other factor demands it, One party is satisfied with the scheme for the Provincial Governments, the other party demands full autonomy in all the provinces. Moderate legislators in Bengal and Bombay and the United Provinces have in their official capacities demanded full autonomy for their respective provinces. The so called Extremists demand it for all.

The Moderates are afraid lest too much criticism of the scheme might endanger it altogether. The opposition in England has unbalanced them. They forget that what is conceded is not being given as a matter of favour, but *because it is impossible to govern India on old lines* and because it is a *necessity* of the times, imposed by the progress of the world and the rapid strides that have taken place in the ideas of men and women about in the functions of governments. They are still quoting the old, timeworn maxims about representative government and political democracy. They have not yet awakened to the consciousness that the old political masters are intellectually effete and dead. Their theories have been suppressed by newer ones which are holding the mind of the world in their grip. The world no longer sears by the words of Mill, Morley Burke and Bryce or others of the old Liberal School. They are interesting landmarks on the highway of human thought, but no more the dispensers of light and the givers or hope. The world has advanced beyond the points covered by their geniuses.

The Montagu scheme cannot fail, because it is a necessity of the times. But even if it does fail, its failure will be no calamity. Its failure will leave two alternative courses open to the masters of India; either to introduce a better and more democratic scheme or to start an active policy of extended repression and suppression. We are not at all afraid of the latter, as there is nothing which gives vigour to a movement for liberty, as repression and suppression. Liberty delayed takes its vengeance on those who delay it. See Russia, Germany and Turkey. The British are too wise to indulge in that. They will concede as well as repress. There is very little danger, then, of Mr. Montague's scheme failing altogether. It is a policy of reform and repression. The Extremists again are childish in demanding a time-limit for the grant of full home rule, forgetting that the authority which fixes the time can cancel it later on. We *shall* get it when we deserve it.

Both parties forget that it is not in the nature of governments to concede more than is absolutely necessary to be conceded in the interest

of their own safety. In fact, governments given the appearance of concession to what has really been won by the people. Judged in this light, the political leaders of India are fighting over crumbs. To us, sitting at a distance, they seem to be devoid of vision and lacking in firmness of principle. They are afraid of ghosts and what frightens them is not the strength of the government but their own weakness. They have no faith in themselves. Some of them have been arm-chair politicians, writing mostly for profit and gain, occasionally giving a tiny fraction of their income in subscriptions; or practising law and making millions out of the wretched pittances which the vast bulk of their countrymen make to remove their hunder. They have always felt for the masses and have expressed their feelings in touching sincere language but they have done precious little to share what they possess or have possessed with the masses. Between them and the masses there is a gulf which they have never tried to bridge. They live in palaces which the masses have not even huts to live in. Most of them are Sirs or Rai Bahadurs, or Khan Bahadurs. They are proud of these titles. Their champions in the Press always give a string of "Sirs" in support of their political views. Too much authority, blind authority, mere authority, whether that of the Prince or the priest, of the Raja or the Nabab, of the oligarch of the official, of the healthy and the prosperous, is the bane of Indian life, yet these stalwarts of reform always take shelter behind big names. Their chief argument is to be found in Who's Who, and if the people who are with them are so many Sirs, so many Honourables, so many Rajas and Nababs, their argument is conclusive. They are mortally afraid of saying or doing things which may offend the Government officials. Even in the selection of their officers in the nominating of their leaders, they do not look to fitness and courage, but seek out the men who are more likely to be acceptable to the authorities. In their management of the Indian National Congress, they have never hesitated to resort to caucus methods, to underhand intrigues, *(As an illustration of their methods we may refer to the Congress of 1906, 1907, 1914)* to canvassing, to filling meetings with their adherents, and so on. They are well conversant with the so called election methods of the Western democracies. Yet they get angry when the same methods are used by their rivals. Now that the Congress has fallen into the hands of the other party, they are calling to the Heavens to witness the calamity. They have wrecked the Congress, says the "Leader". The Congress was "recked" the minute the Moderates left it. The Delhi Session has only registered a *fait accompli*. The opponents

they run down as "youngsters," "damagogues," "inexperienced," "rash," "firebrands" and so on. The people they call "mobocracy". Anything disagreeable to them is immoral, anything distasteful to them is crass stupidity. All the epithets which their erstwhile enemies and their present admirers in the Anglo-Indian press once used against them they are employing against such of their countrymen as do not follow their lead and will not recognise their authority. In a minority, they desire to rule the majority, even more autocratically than they did when they had a majority.

The moderate papers are making great fuss over the fact of some of the old and the most respected leaders being on their side. Time after time they recall the names of filling columns with stories of their sacrifices. We have nothing but respect for these gentlemen, and admiration for their services. Nor do we deny that whatever they say should be heard with respect and attention. They are among the marks and moulders of Modern India and the country owes them gratitude. But if, after giving them a full and respectful hearing the country thinks differently, it is fully entitled to disregard their advice and go its own way.

A leader is one whose leadership satisfies and is effective, one who is always ahead of those whom he seeks to lead, who is fearless and courageous and, above all, whose disinterestedness is above suspicion. He remains a leader so long as he maintains these qualities. *Once a leader is not always a leader. Leadership in a progressive community changes with the time and circumstances.* It does not depend on age or learning; (*Read the history of the various democratic movements in Europe and America. Read the biographies of Parcell and Redmond, Bryan and Roosevelt, Kropothn and Madame Breshkovskaya)* nor on titles and diplomas. Sometimes it is the duty of a leader to restrain, to check, and to warn, but the task becomes impossible if he allows his own thought to fall behind that of his erstwhile followers. In that case his warnings go up unheeded and his attempt to restrain assumes the appearance of tyranny and leads to his fall. A leader who puts his own past services and sacrifices in the forefront of his arguments for a particular course of action puts himself in an awkward and somewhat ridiculous position, especially when his followers find that, comparing his present stand with the opinions expressed by him in immediate past, he seems to have gone back on his own utterances, and for reasons not convincing. Then again, a leader

who begins to boast of his past services and sacrifices invites invidious comparison and odious criticism. Judged by the standard of sacrifices, tribulation and sufferings in the cause of the country, the Moderate leaders must appear very poor as compared with those who are leading the Extremists. Is there one man in the whole Moderate party whose sacrifices and sufferings amount to anything at all as compared with those of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, or Aurobindo Ghosh. With the loss of the Pandit Malaviya the Moderate camp has lost the last man whose sacrifices could be put to the test of critical analysis, excepting, of course, the Servants of India. The others, with their palatial homes, with large bank accounts,with titles before and after their names, with big estates and mills to make their own lives comfortable and the lives of their children secure and snug, can hardly talk of sacrifices. Why, the very positions they occupy today they owe to their patriotism. It is ridiculous then, to claim an acceptance of their views on these grounds.

A few years ago the Leading organs of the Moderate Party used to say that if anything or any Indian appeared to be good and acceptable to the "Pioneer" that thing and that Indian should bed shunned, or at least looked upon with suspicion. They have lived, however, to see their good selves admired and praised and eulogized, not only by "Pioneer" but even by the London "Times," the "Englishman," and the "Civil and Military Gazette." We remember the days when some of these Moderate leaders used to praise the once Sir George Clarke (now Lord Sydenham) to the skies. One of them once wrote that when Sir George speaks the whole country listens with stretched ears and bent beds. (We are not quoting the exact words). Think of the change that has come in their attitude toward the then Sir George Clarke, the present Lord Sydenham. The truth is that all of us are liable to make mistakes. The Moderate leaders have been guilty of blunders in the past, their prudence, foresight, statesmanship and sobriety notwithstanding. Their blunders have been of both kinds, of commission as well as of omission. They have let opportunities for action and advance slip by for lack of courage and want of pluck, by too much prudence and too much expediency, but too much regard for personal safety and personal welfare, by want of foresight and forethought, by ignorance of world conditions and world currents. All of us are more or less affected by self-interest. Who among us can boast of being absolutely selfless? It is no calumny, therefore, to say that even Moderate leaders are and have been affected by personal considerations. There are few among men and women of all countries

who are prepared to suffer for their convictions. Most of us are consciously or unconsciously affected in our opinions and judgements by personal, or family, or clannish, or party interests. In India certainly the number of such persons as are prepared to stand by their convictions even in the face of sufferings and death is very limited. If it were not so the Indians would not be where they are now. It is, in our judgement, extremely foolish; therefore, for any one to claim the acceptance of any views because they are held by Sir-So-and-So or Honourable So-and-So. On the other hand, it is equally foolish to base any argument on false analogies or to indulge in catch words. Facts are facts and they must be faced.

We yield to none in our desire to see our country free, absolutely free. But our conception of freedom perhaps differs from that of both the Moderates and the Extremists. The Moderates want colonial self-government by steps, and so do the Extremists. They differ on steps. Both are prepared to agree to the overwhelming preponderance of power which the holders of property, the possessors of special privileges would maintain in their respective sachems over those that have nothing but their bodies and souls. Special representation is being claimed for the landlord, the big merchant, the capitalist, the aristocrat, as well as for the Mussalman, for the Sikh, for the native Christian, for the domiciled European. These claims are almost all backed up by the moderate leaders. There are few among them (all honour to those who are) who can freely vote in a way that will displease the big Zamindar, the Taluqdar, and the mill owner. The greatest democratic leader of Bengal is always anxious to keep on the side of the big property holders. He is very happy whey they call him the Tribune of the people. His clarion voice gives utterance to beautiful phrases and thoughts framed in inspiring language, but when the time for lofty action comes he is always on the side of property, and privilege, and power. He has his prototypes in other provinces also. The truth is that the Nationalist leaders are and have been lying too much emphasis on expediency and produce and what they call tact. They have read Morley's book on compromise and they quote it is season and off season. Their political thought is old-fashioned and out sterile. Everything is bound to become sterile which is hedged round by considerations of excessive prudence and expediency, so as to bury the element of truth and nobility in it deep down under the debris of policy. We not favour being rash nor do we want to be dogmatic, imprudent, or careless. A certain amount of prudence and

expediency and compromise are necessary in human affairs. One cannot *always* act on a truth the moment one begins to see it. But those who do and can so act deserve all honour. In the long run, it is they who win. Nothing is so inspiring, so magnetic, so forceful in changing public opinion, and in transforming national character as readiness to suffer for truth, for principle, for right, for justice and for the cause. The moral effect of one such life on the development of a nation is equal to or perhaps exceeds that of one hundred well-balanced, sober, prudent, calculating compromising Moderates. Moderation is good so long as it does not become stale and sterile. Moderation in conduct is good so long as it is accompanied by an avowal of the truth. But immoderate moderation or moderation run mad is as dangerous to national development and national welfare as avowed overboard extremism. We think the golden mean is reached when people are absolutely frank and truthful in thought and opinion, and in the expression of thought and opinion, but moderate in the application or enforcement of that truth for an orderly a progress of humanity. Detestable is demagogy for the sake of demagogy, imprudence of speech and rashness of dead, to court martyrdom or even applause. There is nothing meaner nor more despicable than that. There are some people for whom applause is the breath of life; whose private life is full of meanness. Littleness, jealousy, greed selfishness and an overwhelming hanking for popularity, but who thunder fourth in imitation of Moses, Christ, Buddha and Govind Singh when they are on the platform. India in transition has both kinds of leaders. Every nation has, even free nations like England, France, the United States and Japan have plenty of them. Our case becomes more palpable and attracts more attention became we are a subject people and, as such, everyone has the presumption to lecture us and to told up our faults for public exhibition in order to perpetuate or prolong their power over us. Let us not be down-hearted. It is necessary phase through which we are passing. We are neither saints nor devils—only human beings, subject to all the flaws of change and growth.

Our patriotism is sometimes as trained as that of leaders in free countries. Really speaking, there are no free peoples in the world. The democracies of the United States. Great Britain and France are only democracies in name. The men in power, those who possess property, enjoy privileges, are as tyrannical towards their own common people as they are towards us. Only they fear of former more than they fear us. They never do things for the sake of justice and fair play. They do

things when they are afraid of the consequences of not doing them. So long as they are safe or believe they are safe, they oppress their own people and their own countrymen almost as much as they do us. They exploit them mercilessly; they make them draw water and hew wood for them. No one need place much faith on their liberal of democratic professions. There are very few who are really liberal, who have the courage of their convictions, who act as they feel. Morleys and Bryces only differ in degree from Curzons and Milners. Do not pin your faith in any of them. At heart the Liberals and Conservatives are the same. The Liberals have killed Liberalism in Great Britain by their hypocritical, time-serving Imperialism and Capitalism.

The people from whom Young Indian should draw inspirations are those who live or have lived by the sweat of their brow, who are or have been producers who know or have known what poverty and ignorance and lack of opportunity and subservience to others mean. Even among them there are none talkers and writers who are professionals, who have big bank accounts and who have amassed wealth by saying good things and playing on the imagination and fancy of the common people. Even they are not the real people who should inspire us in our struggle. Young Indian should stand by Keir Hadies, Lansburys and Smillies.

To our extremist countrymen we beg to submit that in our judgment there is great force in the statement that complete independence will not be to out advantage. As for full home rule, so long as the masses do not show almost incontestably that they are with us, it is not likely to be granted, not because of the reasons that our national enemies advance, not for lack of intelligence of character; not because we are divided by cleavages of religion, race, language and culture; not because we are too poor, but for different reasons. We are poor because others do not let us use what we have. Our illiteracy is no disgrace. Even in our illiteracy we are more sober, more thoughtful and more considerate than the literate millions of America and Europe. We are not lacking in character because we have more of self-control, more of plain honesty, more of simplicity, less of greed, and less of the desire to kill others than the Europeans and Americans have. Neither are the cleavages of religion, race and language any bar to Home Rule in India. They are to be found in other countries which are free. What we lack is firmness to stand by our rights, vigour and determination to resist oppression, tyranny and wrongdoing, whether practised by our own

countrymen or by foreigners; readiness to suffer for the cause and the country; willingness to stand by what is right and truthful even if we lose the whole works by such a stand. But the chief reason is that we have no power to enforce our demand for Home Rule. The military argument, the argument of industrial strikes and Labour Unions are all lacking. So long as they are lacking, however much we may foam and fret, we shall never get Home Rule.

We are neither Moderate nor Extremist, nor even 'revolutionary' in the ordinary sense of the word. In our judgement both the moderates and the extremists have so far failed to give the right lead.

The moderates have taught us ultra-moderate prudence, expediency, over-cautiousness, dread of democracy and an undue respect for authority. Yet the Moderates produced great would like cokhale and Malaviya.

Nor have the Extremists been free from the vices of demagogy, conceit and swelling of the head. They have produced great souls, like Aurobindo and Tilak, to speak only of the Hindus. The Mussalmans have produced some really good men like the Ali brothers, Jinnah, Hasan Imam and Rasul.

The man, however, who is after our own heart, though we do not always agree with him in politics, is Gandhi.

The Revolutionaries have shown great courage and spirit of sacrifice but they have also taught us lying and deception, double-dealing and duplicity, beside assassination, robbery and dacoity. It is hopeless to expect a country to be great by any of these methods.

What the country needs is a band of leaders pledged to absolute truthfulness, frankness, openness and above all, fearlessness and simplicity. We want leaders who will live like the common people, eating the food of the common people, dressing as the common people, sometimes working with their hands for their living and sharing with the common people their thoughts, their anxieties, and their troubles. We want leaders who will not make false or equivocal defence whenever the authorities choose to prosecute them. We want leaders who will not be afraid to attack and criticise the men of property, power and privilege among their countrymen as fearlessly and mercilessly as they do the foreign exploiter, who will realize and preach that what they want is really democracy, genuine democracy, and not the mere substitution of

the rule of their own men of property and privilege in place of the foreign Imperialist and Capitalist. We do not mind if the real thing comes a little late. What we want is genuine gold and not counterfeit coin. We know that perhaps the rule of our own men will in any case be better than that of the foreigner. At present we have two masters. With elimination of the foreign exploiter we shall have left one, the domestic one. That is true. We do not oppose the process of elimination. But at the same time we want a clear realization of the issue. We want to start on the right road, with an absolutely clear conscience. We do not want to give our time and energy and life for the benefit of the native exploiter, by he prince or priest. We want to preach the gospel of social democracy.

Now we do not want to be misunderstood. We know that we cannot fly the flag of Socialism. We do not understand Socialism. We have never studied it. We do not go by dogmas and doctrines. We know this much—that the present constitution of society is wrong and unjust, it is cruel and barbaric—even more barbaric than it ever was in primitive time, before the dawn of civilization. Civilization has brought misery and hunger, death and disease, to the masses of mankind. We do not want to go back to the primitive age. We cannot go back, even if we would. We want an era of equal opportunity and equal justice to all. In our judgement it is the first duty of every government to see:

(1) That not a single member of the body politics suffers from lack of clean and nourishing food, from want of sanitary housing and decent clothing.

(2) That every child of a mother, whether it be of lawful or unlawful origin (every child is of lawful origin, in so far as he is the product of natural impulses and absolutely natural forces) shall get not only good food and good clothing but ample opportunities for education and development on its own lines.

(3) That every adult must contribute to the sum total of a nation's living. That every adult must engage himself or herself in some productive or creative work, whether physical or intellectual.

(4) That every member of society gets sufficient leisure to devote himself to the cultivation of the finer side of himself.

(5) That no one kills another unless in self-defence or in defence or society.

(6) That everyone has according to the need of himself and his family free access to land, air, water and other natural and artificial products, necessary to make a decent living and lead a decent life.

(7) That no one uses another against his or her will by force of threat.

(8) That everyone has an equal political status except when by common consent and for common purposes he or she is invested with a higher status for a temporary period.

(9) That everyone is entitled to select his or her own habit and membership in social group, into which he or she likes to gain admittance, provided he or she does not thereby infringe on the liberties or rights of others.

(10) That men and women are treated alike with rights and obligations differentiated only by their physical constitutions.

Subject to these principles, if any member of a social group makes more wealth or comes into possession of it by the sweat of his brow, he is welcome to have it and enjoy it if thereby he inflicts no wrong on others, jointly or severally.

These are our principles and we want a body of sincere men to preach them in India.

In our judgement the era of political revolutions is over. It is shortsighted to try to bring about revolutions by assassinations, murders, terrorism, or dacoity, only to find that we have substituted one class of masters for another. What we need is none of these methods.

We want a body of Indian politicians to agitate and press the claim that every tiller of the soil gets sufficient land or such tenure as will enable him to earn a decent and comfortable living. The government has no right to tax man whose income is not sufficient for the elemental needs of himself and those who are dependent on him. Nor has the landlord any right to squeeze all he can out of starving cultivators, regardless of the fact that what is left is sufficient for him and his family or not. Down with the foolish doctrine of demand and supply. Down with competition. We insist that the Government of India, whether manned by the British or by the Indian so change the land laws as to secure a sufficient holding to every tiller of the soil on terms which will enable him to live a decent life.

The inauguration of new industries is very good. We want industrial development but even there we do not want it under conditions which will deny the wage-earner a decent living wage. We insist upon the recognition of the right of the human being to a decent living provide out of land or from industries. We maintain that a body politic which does not recognize that duty is a lawless body existing on the exploitation of human beings. All other needs of a body politic—the need of security from without and from within—the need for public works, for highly paid government servants, for national pleasures—must be subject to this elemental duty. We want the Indian political leaders to take up that question and to hammer it. It will have its effect on all legislation. It will create a political and economic consciousness among the masses which will in time become irresistible. Besides it will be an acid test of the sincerity of those Britishers who say that they are in India in the interest of and for the good of the masses and who oppose Home Rule because they believe that unless the masses are politically conscious of their right, their interests can be betters looked after by the British officials than by their own educated and propertied countrymen. Of course we know that is a lie. But then, whey not hold them to what they say and ask them to prove their sincerity by deeds. Let us ask them what they are prepared to do, so that the ryot may earn a decent living according to modern standards of comfort as administered in light of Indian conditions. Let us prepare a catechism on these lines and submit it to every British legislator, pointing out at the same time how the various British Governments in India are even now employed in creating big landlords, bankers, merchants, high pension-holders. Men are being allowed assignments from public revenues who already possess more that they need, simply because they are sycophants and support the various Governors and Lieutenant-Governors in their nefarious policies. These are termed, rewards disbursed from the English Exchequer? Why is the poor Indian ryot being saddled with them?

We are sorry to see well intentioned, apparently honest, intelligent countrymen wasting their breath, time and energy on non-essentials and ignoring essentials. By so doing they distract the public mind and prevent the focusing of public attention on matters which really count.

In all humiliation and earnestness we submit these lines for their consideration and attention, though we can anticipate the reply—"Impractical, impossible, inexpedient". To lawyers, landlords, big

capitalists, and big officials, well-paid editors, and titled gentlemen a scheme like that *must always* appear impractical.

But that about the "servants of India"? Why are they wasting away their lives to better up capitalism? Perhaps by force and for want of anything better to do. Why are they licking the boots of the bureaucracy, why are they cringing before Sirs, Justices and Rajas? Why, we repeat and pause for a reply.

REFERENCE

1. *Young India* 31 May 1919.

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Congress Presidential Address of Lajpat Rai

My first duty is to tender to you most cordial thanks for the high honour you have done me in calling me to this office, the highest in your gift and at a session which is perhaps the most momentous in the history of our movement. The honour is the greater because the session is being held at Calcutta, a place which has always been associated in my mind with the best and the truest ideals of Indian Nationalism. It was at Calcutta that the first important political movement of the last century was ushered into existence, and it was a Calcutta orator, the greatest that the country has so far produced under British rule, who was the first standard bearer of political agitation all over Northern India. It was at Calcutta that the ideals if the new Nationalism that has since then grown into a mighty tree, were first expounded and explained by one of the purest minded and the most intellectual of Bengal's gifted sons. I mean Sir Aurbindo Ghosh. It was at Calcutta again that the Grand Old Man of India, the revored and universally respected Dadabhai Naoroji, set the ideal of Swaraj before us in clear and unambiguous language, an ideal which has since guided us in all our political endeavours.[1]

A Great Struggle

It was with great reluctance that I made up my mind to accept the call of duty to which the All India Congress Committee by the decision invited me. Our politics are no more of the old humdrum kind, about which practically there was no, or if at all very little difference of opinion. We are no longer contented with resolutions, prayers and memorials. We have advanced beyond the first stage of very humble submission, have crossed the boundaries of respectful demand, and have

entered into the arena of backing our demands by vigorous and compelling action of a peaceful kind. The country is at the present moment in the throes of a momentous struggle. The Anglo-Indian press has designated its as revolutionary. There are many people to whom the word revolution is like a red rag to a bull. I am not one of them. Words do not sear me. It is no use blinking the fact that we are passing through a revolutionary period, nay, we are already in the grip of mighty revolution, a comprehensive and all-covering one, religious, intellectual, educational, social, economic and political. We are by instinct and tradition averse to revolutions. Traditionally, we are a slow going people but when we decide to move, we do move quickly and by rapid strides. No living organism can altogether escape revolutions in the course of its existence. Our national history records many such. But the revolutionary struggle through which we are now passing has been brought to our shores by our rulers. It is they who completely changed without our consent and sometimes against our wishes, the whole structure or four social life by introducing revolutionary economic changes in the country. We never asked for them, we never desired them; but primarily in their own interests and for their own benefit they introduced them. Alongwith these economic changes, they have partially, if not completely, changed our outlook on life by their system of education, by their newspapers, by their laws and by their courts. Some of these changes we would very much like to undo, but whether we or even they can do so now is at best problematic. Any way, the present political situation is a natural outcome of their own policy and is their handiwork. If then any one is to be blamed for it (I for one do not blame any one), it is they themselves. Many of the would probably like to set the hands of the clock back but it is no longer in their power nor is it in ours to do so. We are following a course which we shall have to keep to, and whether we wish it or not, we are, I repeat, in the thick of a great struggle, the end of which no one can foresee. The better mind of the country is opposed to the use of any kind of violence, whether or language or of deed, in bringing the struggle to a satisfactory close; we are doing our level best sincerely and honestly to achieve our end by peaceful means and with the sincere desire to keep our connection with the ruling class on a basis of mutual friendship and reciprocal interests. But there are persons among the latter who are bent upon thwarting us, who professedly and openly claim their right to rule us by the sword, and who maintain that they have a right to exploit us by all the means available to them by virtue of their military and intellectual power. We

are thus fact to face with a great struggle between the forces of democratic change, English and Indian, and reactionary militarism. In order to go through the struggle successfully, we will require all the manliness and strength, all the wisdom and tact and all the determination and struggle we are capable of putting forth. Above all what we need most is calmness and coolness of judgement, moderation in language and firmness in action.

At such a time and under such circumstances, the loss of a leader like the late lamented Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak is a misfortune and a calamity, the magnitude of which it is difficult to encompass by words. Just when we had the greatest need of his unswerving loyalty and steadfast devotion to the cause of his country, his cool and calm judgment, his unfaltering and firm patriotism, an inscrutable providence has snatched him from us. The universal grief which this sad event has evoked, and the unique demonstrations which have followed his death throughout the length and breadth of, this vast sub-continent, have been a revelation both to his friends and foes. This extraordinary manifestation of popular feeling is almost unparalleled in the history of India. All sections of people, regardless of caste, creed and colour, regardless of social, religious and political divisions, regardless of social, religious and political divisions, regardless of economic distinctions have taken part in it, and have given conclusive proof, if any was needed that in estimating the worth of its leaders and servants, the country knows its mind and has no inclination of allowing its judgement to be affected by the wishes and opinions of the highest amongst the dignitaries of the state. Here and there a few mean attempts were made to insinuate that the deceased leader was anti-Muslim, but our Muslim fellow countrymen have been the most forward and the most fervent in the expressions of their regard and love for him. Some members of the ruling class, too, have behaved with admirable judgment. Great as has been the loss of the country generally, the loss of the Indian National Congress is even greater. The Congress has by his death lost one of its few surviving founders, one who by his indomitable will and energy and his unique sacrifices and sufferings had contributed the most to building up of that life of the country which finds its expression in the present activities of this national movement. It will be one of the first items of business of this Session to put on record in befitting language our sense of the great and irreparable loss we have suffered by death of Lokmanya Tilak.

National Problems

This Session of the Congress has been convened in accordance with an understanding arrived at between the leaders at the Amritsar Congress,[2] for the purpose of considering the Hunter Committee Report and the decision of the government thereupon relating to the Punjab disturbances of that last year. Since the Amritsar Congress finished its labours, another important question has been added to our national problems, which requires a speedy and immediate consideration both in the interests of peace and good government. The disappointment which has been caused to our Muslim countrymen by the Turkish Peace Treaty and its effects on the Khilafat is keen and bitter. Lastly, there is the important question of Reform Rules on which the success of the Reforms, such as they are, so largely depends. The All India Congress Committee, therefore, have added the Khilafat question and also the rules and regulations under the Reforms Act, to the subject for which originally according to the understanding at the Amritsar Congress, this Session was to be convened. These, then, are the subjects which will be before you during this Session for consideration and decision.

Punjab Disorders

Taking the Punjab disorders first, since we met last at Amritsar, the Congress Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Enquiry Sub-Committee of the All Indian Congress Committee have issued their report. The Hunter Committee appointed by the Government of India have also finished their labours and published their report, and the Government of India and the British Cabinet have passed their orders on that report. The report of the Hunter Committees is not unanimous. All the Indian members have different from the majority on matters which in my judgement are "basic". Similarly, the Government of India also are not unanimous. The only Indian member of the Government of Indian (at the time) has accepted the conclusion of the minority and different from the majority. The country has with one voice condemned the majority report as well as the decision of the government there-upon. We, in this Congress are expected to focus the opinion of the country in the matter and recommend such action as we think ought to be taken for the redress of the wrong that has been done.

To arrive at a proper understanding of the position, one has to look into a whole lot of circumstances which preceded the agitation against the Rowlatt Act and to bear in mind that the person who is

principally responsible for the Punjab tragedy, the man whose general policy created the atmosphere which made it possible for a Dyer, a Bosworth smith, an O'Brian, a Deveton, a Frank Johnson and other smaller fry, to commit the unmentionable outrages of ·vhich they were guilty, in the five days immediately preceding the introduction of Martial Law, and all through its continuance in the spring of 1919 in the Punjab, is Sir Michael O'Dwyer. From the very moment he took charge of the province he set before him an ideal of government which was Prussian in conception, Prussian in aim and Prussian in execution. For six long years he occupied himself in working out his ideals and in carrying out his plans. Every item was carefully thought out, and with equal care entrusted to agents who were not fitted and willing to achieve the end desired by the Head of the Government. If ever there intervened on obstacle or a hindrance it was removed without the least pang of conscience, and without the slightest consideration of its morality or even legality, so much so that even the European members of the Indian Civil Service who refused to endorse his opinions or to carry out his mandate, had to retire into the background.

To the misfortune of the Punjabees the Punjab happens to be practically military province on account of its nearness to the Frontier, and because of there being so many military stations in the vicinity of the most important civil stations. The Punjab Commission has besides, always had on its personnel, a good many representatives of the military service. The punjab bureaucracy has thus been more or less always dominated by military ideals, and the civil administration of that Province has never been absolutely free from military influence. The Civilians, living in or in the vicinity or military stations, and passing about six months in the year in hill stations, where the military predominates, are consciously or unconsciously affected by the opinions and views of their military fell-officers. No wonder, then that in spite of the lavisn praises bestowed on the Punjabees by the Anglo-Indian administrators, and in spite of the most extravagant solicitude shown by them in words for the prosperity of the Punjab, the bulk of the Punjabees are the most ignorant and the most abjectly situated of all the people of India. It is extremely painful, socially for a Punjabees to say that under and in consequence of the British rule, the many races of the Punjab should have lost that independence of character and bearing for which they had a name in Indian history prior to British rule. It will be no exaggeration to say that for military reasons the

bureaucracy has kept the martial races of the Punjab ignorant and in conditions of submissiveness bordering on abject servility. The Punjabees are reputed to have a splendid physique. The rural Punjab is the flower of British Indian army. Even urban Punjab has a population which is physically superior to the similarly placed people of other parts of India; yet it is remarkable that whenever plague and influence have attacked the province, the Punjabees have been the most willing to die in entirely disproportionate numbers. One may naturally ask, why? The answer is because of the dense ignorance of the Punjab masses, because of the lack of that political consciousness which makes men self-reliant and self-respecting. The exigencies of militarism have inspired the policy of keeping the Punjab peasantry illiterate as well as politically dumb. But for the strength of character shown by some of Sir Michael O'Dwyer predecessors in the office of the lieutenant-Governor particularly Sir C. Aitchison and Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick the Punjab would have been in a still worse position.

The policy of militarism, however, reached its climax with the advent in the province of Sir Michael O'Dwyer who had been absent from the Province for about 15 years, having originally served there in minor capacities, returned as the head of the government with a determination to crush the spirit which has made 1907 and 1910 possible. In 1913, when he took charge of the Province the people had considerably changed from what they had been when he was last there. They were not so very submissive and there was a little political awakening was one of his principal aims. So when he returned he set before him as his ideal a Prussian system of administration. All through the period of his office he was guided by that ideal.

(i) I charge him with having deliberately intensified the policy of 'divide and rule' by keeping apart the Mahommadans from the Hindus and both from the Sikhs.

(ii) I charge him with having created fresh political divisions between the people of the Province by drawing purely artificial and mischievous distinctions between martial and educated classes and between the rural and urban interests and creating unhealthy rivalry between them.

(iii) I charge him with having made illegal use of the process of law and of his authority for recruitment purposes, and for getting contributions for the war loan and other war funds.

(iv) I charge him with having condoned and in a way encouraged the most brutal and diabolic deeds of those who were his tools in recruiting and war loan campaigns and with having failed to check bribery and corruption among the subordinate police and magistracy.

(v) I charge him with having debased and misused the forms and processes of law for the purpose of crushing those who would not bend their knees to him and who showed the slightest independence of spirit and a desire for political advancement.

(vi) I charge him with having deliberately deceived the Government of India as to the necessity of Marital Law and as to the necessity of trying cases of ordinary sedition under the process of that law. He was guilty of a clear falsehood at this stage when he suggested to the Government of India that the General Officer Commanding in the Punjab agreed with his views.

(vii) I charge him with having been instrumental, by express or tacit consent and by encouragement, by word and deed, in the promulgation of barbarous orders and the infliction of barbarous punishments and humiliations on the people of the Punjab.

(ix) I charge him at least with being an accessory after the event of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. By his unqualified approval of the Jallianwala massacre he made himself responsible for all the outrages committed by the Martial Law administrators in pursuance of his policy.

(x) I charge him with having connived at perfectly illegal exactions from the people of the Punjab in the shape of punitive fines and penalties.

(xi) I charge him with culpable neglect of duty in not going to Amritsar, first on the 11th (April 1919) after the deplorable events of the 10th, and then on the 14th after the massacre at the Jallianwalal Bagh.

(xii) I charge him, lastly, with extorted addresses form the people of the Punjab, on the eve of his departure by illegal and mean threats, one of them having been altered in a material particular when in the custody of his minions, and having made a dishonest use of them in his defence in England.

These are serious charges, and I bring them with all the weight of the office to which you have raised me with common consent of the country. I challenge an enquiry and I declare before God and man that my Province and my people will lnot be satisfied until such an enquiry has been made.

I have now done with the story of the Punjab. I have given the story at some length, because I began by formulating certain charges against Sir Michael O'Dwyer at the commencement of my address, and it was my duty to make out a *prime facie* case in support of these charges. I hope and trust that I have made out my case to your satisfaction, that of all the person who had anything to do with the introduction of Martial Law in the Punjab and with the events that preceded and followed it, Sir Michael was the chief culprit. Indeed, I may venture to assert that no man in the whole history of British rule in India has done *such a disservice to the British Empire and has brought such disgrace on the good name of the British nation as Sir Michael O'Dwyer.*

The root cause of all this evil, as I have pointed out before, is the Prussian conception of government which dominates the minds of so many of our Anglo-Indian rulers of whom Sir Michael O'Dwyer was the type and which places the State as something above and beyond the people. It was that conception of government which made it possible for Lord Chelmsford's Government to pass the Rowlatt Bill into law; it was this conception which made it possible for Sir Michael O'Dwyer to deport Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal and subsequently to have Martial Law declared in the Punjab. Every official who has had anything to do with this lamentable affair was filled with the same idea, namely, of making an example, 'teaching a lesson', 'creating moral effect' and 'restoring the prestige of government' by terrorism and frightfulness. General Dwyer boasted that he had acted with that motive. Colonel O'Brien, Captain Doveton, Lieutenant-Colonel Macrae, Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, Mr. Bosworth Smith, and even some of the Judges who presided at the trial of Martial Law offenders were all inspired by the same ideal, which made many of the inhuman in their dealings with the Punjabees during the terrible days of the Martial Law. We had the sad spectacle of a government and its high officials neglecting to take the most essential precautions for preventing unnecessary sacrifice of life and property in the carrying out of their plans. They admit that in no cases, where they resorted to firing and shooting, did they make any

provision for first-aid to the wounded. In some cases they even refused to make over the bodies of the dead to their relatives. In others they took no notice of the dead. We have also evidence of the fact that troops destroyed property wholesale in the districts through which they passed, that even high officials of the standing of Deputy Commissioners exacted all kinds of contributions from the people within their respective jurisdiction; that they obtained articles of food and other necessities of life without paying for them, and in addition realised levies and fines and penalties from whole populations. We have also evidence of the fact that in giving effect to the orders of Martial Law Tribunals' about the forfeiture of property, inhuman cruelties were practised on the women and children of the 'offenders'. In some cases they were thrown on the streets and were not even allowed to take sufficient clothing for the night and this was done not by subordinate officials but by high officials.

I have narrated the events of Sir Michael O'Dwyer's administration at some length in order to show that it was all through, a regime to terrorism and frightfulness in the literal sense of these words and that it was only carried to its logical conclusion in the months of April and May, 1919. In the words used by Mr. Montague with reference to the action of General Dyer the ideals which Sir Michael O'Dwyer had set before himself were 'terrorism, humiliation and subordination' and they reached their climax in the promulgation and administration of Martial Law. Witness after witness has appeared before the Hunter Committee and has practically boasted of his acts of crueey and oppression. General Dyer himself has justified all that he did. Colonel Frank Johnson is proud of everything that was done by him. He said in one case that was one of the few brain waves he had in his life. Captain Deveton, Colonel O'Brien, Major Bosworth Smith all testify in the same spirit. There was only one incident for which Colonel Frank Johnson expressed his regret, and that was the flogging of the marriage party. Others were not sorry for anything, and said that they would do the same thing if ever there was a chance of doing so. Here then we have the tragedy of the situation.

We believe that the principles and conduct of these men are entirely opposed to the traditions and the policy of the British Government, particularly the policy that underlines the Reform Scheme. We are afraid, however, that in the Punjab the majority of the bureaucracy are of the same mentality. The vast majority of the non-official European community is also of the same mind and so are a good

many of the European and American missionaries. If such is the mentality of so many members of the Indian Civil Service, who, after all, are the real rulers of the country and in whom is vested the task of administration, what is the remedy. In the face of the statements made before the Hunter Committee by European witness, the wholesale defence of General Dyer and others by the Anglo-Indian Pressess and and the Anglo-Indian community, the raising of memorial funds for him and in his honour, and last but not the least the resolution passed by the House of Lords, how can we Indians, possibly, assume that the British in England and the European community in Indian generally have accepted, in sincerity, the Reform Scheme and the principles that underlie it? These principles imply that if not at once at least in a short time we must be free in our own country, with power to make and unmake our government, subject only to the maintenance of the Imperialist, it being our interest and right to shorten the period of transition as much as possible. The Indian Civil Service and the European community of India and the House of Lords evidently think otherwise. They conceive it to be in their interest to prolong the period of transition by all methods open to them and many of the are frankly anxious to defeat the Reforms Scheme and revert to the old systems of Government. If then the struggle between these two interests is to be conducted on the lines that were in evidence in the Martial Law regime, it seems to be absolutely futile to think of friendly co-operation between the two interests. It is all very well for those who are still in power to ask us to drop the matter and let by-gones be by-gones. I which I could ask you to do the same. I am not actuated by any vindictive and revengeful motive, and I fully believe that my people are not but how can we sit silent and let the matter drop in the face of all that has happened in India and in England, in connection with the events of last year until full and complete justice has been done and until steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of the tragic state of things. The Government of India and the British Cabinet have gone out of their way to praise and belaud a man whom we consider to be the chief culprit in this whole drama of oppression and tyranny. If that praise is justified and if we acquiesce in by our silence, then surely we deserve what was done to us. If not, then, it is our duty to press for the punishment and prosecution of Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

The Punjab tragedy was not a provincial affair, but a national one. Our manhood, our self-respect, our national dignity, nay, our very existence as a nation, depends on our having the principles and practices

of Sir Michael O'Dwyer condemned, and once for all abrogated. We owe it to ourselves, to our women, to our children and also to those unborn, to fight it out and not let the matter drop without obtaining effective guarantees that it will not be possible for any one however, high his position in the government of the country, to enact much like tragedies again. It is our duty also to repudiate as emphatically as we can the fundamentally erroneous, I was going to say, vicious and Prussian-conceptions, which found frequent expression in Sir Michael O'Dwyer's speeches, that the security of life and property is the primary duty of government. The security of life and property is only a means to an end. What is the end? The uplifting of the human race and its progress towards the fullness of freedom, which means towards divinity. Peace is a good thing, but life is still better", says Rabindranath Tagore in one of his essays on Nationalism.

If the British rulers of India propose to give us mere security of life and property by denying us honour and liberty we must refuse to have them. There is no life without freedom and there is no freedom without "Swarajya" or self-government.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe I give expression to you sentiments when I say to our rulers, that although the British Government is mighty enough to crush all our efforts by their military power, any success they achieve by military efforts would be a very expensive one. The British Raj is no longer synonymous with justice and fair-play in the mind of the average citizen and the more it is dragged into the mire by man like Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the more it will loss in what has hitherto constituted its boast.

We, on our part, are determined not to let our morale go under, to fight only a clean fight. We shall continue to condemn unhesitatingly and unequivocally all those who commit violence or insult or humilities women, irrespective of their nationality, or who commit such acts of inhumanity as characterised the Dyer's tragedy. If all this fails to bring us the necessary relief, I for one hope and believe that it will not, will, then the future is in the lap of the gods. I want in your name and in the name of the country which we have the honour to represent, to tell Mr. Montague and through him the British Cabinet, that we accept in full the principles that he has laid down in the speech which he made in the course of the Dyer debate in the House of Commons. For our part we are fully prepared to act on those principles and to cherish the connection with the British Commonwealth as a desirable privilege, but

shall be deceiving ourselves as well as Mr. Montague if we do not tell him also that in the light of the events that happened in the Punjab last year, the people of this-country require something more than speeches and resolutions and despatches to prove that the British Cabinet and the British people are equally sincere and equally earnest for the principles laid down by Mr. Montague. Here let me make one thing clear. If partnership of the Commonwealth means full freedom to us in India, with responsibility for the burden of the Commonwealth to the extent of our interest in it, we accept that ideal of partnership but if partnership in the Empire means and includes the permanence of racial or alien domination in any shape, form or degree in the Government of India, then we do not accept that ideal. We are determined at no distant date to be entirely free in our country, in the same sense as South Africans are free in South Africa, Canadians in Canada, Australians in Australia and the British at home. Any qualification of that ideal we will not admit. All those Europeans who are domiciled in this country are our countrymen, and it shall be our duty to respect their rights in the same way as we shall respect the rights of any other community in India. But beyond this we are not prepared to go. Further we are also determined not to let ourselves be used as willing tools to crush the liberties of the rest of the world. We of the Indian National Congress have declared that we are quite fit for completed autonomy even now, yet we did accept, however inadequate and unsatisfactory, the installment given to us as evidence of *bona fides* of the British statesmen. We were prepared to work out the Reform Scheme to the best of our ability as a stepping stone to fill responsible government but we must frankly tell Mr. Montague that the events of the Punjab have shaken our faith in the motives of those who seek our co-operation in the ostensible working out of the Reform Scheme.

I will conclude this part of my address by stating in brief what we want, (a) We want complete and unequivocal repudiation and condemnation of Sir Michael O'Dwyer and if possible his prosecution and punishment. We also want that an open enquiry be held into the methods adopted by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in the recruiting campaign and in raising war loans and war funds. (b) We want the release of the remaining Martial Law prisoners and all the men that are still rotting in jails under convictions of the Special Tribunals and the Martial Law Courts. We shall be quite ready to have such of them retired by ordinary courts as were accused of murders of other charges of that nature; but

we refuse to accept the judgments of the Special and the Martial Law Courts as good judicial pronouncements. (c) We insist that all the loss incurred by the people of the Punjab by the vagaries of the troops and the officials in the course of the Martial law administration be made good and that all punitive fines and penalties imposed and recovered by remitted and returned. (d) We demand that all the disqualifications that are involved in the conviction of men by the Martial Law Tribunals be set aside, either by law or by a general order of the government. (e) We further require that an open enquiry be held into the charges of bribery, corruption, extortion and torture that have been made by the witnesses before the Congress Commissioners against Police Officers of whatever rank, and other officials. (f) We also insist that if the authors of the Reform Scheme want a fair trial for it, they must remove from the Punjab all such officers as were connected with the outrages, as a proof or their *bone fides.* (g) If there be any others in the Punjab or elsewhere we do not accept the principles of the Reform Scheme they also must go, even if they have to be retired on suitable pensions. They should not be there to desert the Reform Scheme by the exercise of powers that are still left to them to a very great extent by the Reform Scheme itself. The Department of Law and the control of the Police is entirely in their hands and unless the people of India get control of these Departments they cannot effectively prevent the higher officials from exercising these powers high-handedly and arbitrarily as they did in the Punjab and as, to our knowledge and regret, they are doing even now in some places. (h) The Government of India too must shoulder their share of the responsibility for the Punjab tragedy. Their decision on the Hunter Committee's Report was a foregone conclusion. All the credit which they were entitled to, for their efforts to shorten the period of Martial Law had been discounted by their present justification of its continuances. If the view which the British Cabinet has taken of General Dyer's action and of the excesses of the Martial Law administration is correct (and it is much below the reality), then I submit the least that Lord Chelmsford can do with honour is to retire from his high office. They let the people of the Punjab sulk and suffer under the impression that there was no one to hear their cries.

Under the circumstances the country's demand for the recall of the Viceroy seems to be just and proper.

Speaking of the Government of India, I must not omit to make mention of the noble stand made by our distinguished countryman, Sir

Sankaran Nair, against the policy of the government relating to the Punjab. His forcible protests, ending in this resignation from his high office, are wholly of the best traditions of Indian patriotism and will be remembered as long as India is articulate. His bold, blunt and burning love of justice and fair-play, his high sense of duty and absolute disregard of personal losses are such as to make every Indian proud of him.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I close this account of the wrongs inflicted on the Punjab, I must tell you that the narrative is by no means exhaustive. For want of time and space I have omitted many facts and incidents, as telling as those related, and I believe there are many more which have not yet been brought to light. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee have resolved to undertake the work of investigation from the point where it was left by the Congress Commissioners, so as to complete the record, as far as practicable. Nor must I pass to the next subject without recording the bright side of this gruesome tale. It is true that Sir Michael O'Dwyer did succeed in terrorising and overawing the Punjabees for a while, but as soon as the first shock was over, the people recovered almost instantaneously. Of the victims of official aggression there is one man whose name I must mention, who by his cool and calm behaviour, his bold and defiant attitude, his manly notions of self-respect and honour, historic indifference to consequences set an example for other and earned the ever lasting respect of his countrymen. I refer, of course, to Lala Harkishen Lal.

Having passed through the fire of Martial Law, the Punjab is today purer, stronger, more advanced, more determined, more patriotic and very much more united. The so called backward Muslim masses are vying with their Hindu countrymen in showing a united political front, and the Sikhs (young and old) are outdoing themselves. No words can describe their enthusiasm for political regeneration and their readiness to suffer and sacrifice.

If Martial Law has produced such good results in the Punjab itself, it has done still greater wonders in the cause of Indian unity. The political consciousness of the people of India has advanced by at least ten years. I believe I am giving expression to you sentiments, Ladies and Gentlemen, when I say that the country owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Hon'ble Pandit Motilal Nehru, the most reversed Mahatma M.K. Gandhi and Messrs. C. R. Das, Jayakar and Tyabji. Our immortal Rabindranath

Tagore's letter to the viceroy will ever remain their character of national self-respect and dignity, for the future generations of India. As Punjabee I must offer my gratitude to all who have espoused the cause of my province in her hour of affliction, as an Indian I am proud of the stand made by the country. Surely, it is a new day and a most cheering day to find that in this matter the Hon'ble Mian Mahommed Shafi should be on the same side, as the most uncompromising Indian radical politician, be he of Bengal or Maharashtra. The one Englishman, whose name I must mention with gratitude is Mr. C.F. andrews, who is now one of us. Nor can we withhold our praise from the Indian members of the Hunter Committee, for their independence of character and for the statesmen like view they have taken of the affairs in the Punjab. The country's best thanks are due to them for their lucid and masterly report.

They say that every cloud has its silver lining. To me it looks as if the Punjab tragedy has a golden hue with the memory of the Amritsar martyrs, with the pictures of Ratan Devil, Madan Mohan and Khushi Ram engraved on our hearts, with the recollection of the dying Muslim urchin, who invoked the "Hindu Musalman ki jai" with his last breath, with the example of the suffers of the Martial Law, we will march on to our goal of national unity and national freedom, with hope and confidence.

Khilafat Question

The second question that had been referred to the Special Session of the Congress, for consideration and decision is the question of the "Khilafat". Seventy millions of our Muslim countrymen are stirred over it. The question had two aspects; they religious and the political. We of the merits of the Khilafat question from the religious point of view. In the words of Mr. Laland Buxton "it does not in the least matter what professor this or Doctor that thinks the consider Muslims ought to believe. What does matter is, that the vast majority of consider Sunni Muslims do believe that the Sultan of Turkey is their Khalifa and the interests of Islam require him to be the head of a large, powerful and independent State," The Mohammedan Law-books define the boundaries of such a State.

There is perfect unanimity among the Mohammedans of India on the religious merits of the question. I do not believe there could be more than one person in a mission among the *Sunni* Mohammedans of India who entertains any doubts in the matter. We may then take it for granted

that the interpretation put upon this matter by the Central Khilafat Committee is correct. It was a matter for our Mohammedan countrymen to decide and they have decided it. They contend that the Turkish Peace Treaty violates the fundamentals of Islam, prevents them from fulfilling their religious obligations, makes it impossible for them to maintain friendly relations with a nation which is the cause of it.

They also maintain that the Turkish Settlement has violated the solemn pledged given to the people of India by British statesmen during the War.

In the first place, after the declaration of the War between England and Turkey in 1914, the Government of India on behalf of His Majesty's Government as also the Government of France and Russia Promptly issued a proclamation assuring "His majesty's most loyal Muslim subjects" that "no question of a religious character was involved" in the War "and disclaiming any British designs against the Holy Places of Islam." Again in January 1918 speaking in the name of the whole Empire the British Prime Minister made the following unambiguous and remarkable pronouncement:

"Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor which are predominantly Turkish in race." Finally, came the armistice with Turkey, and it is important to recall that it was signed on the basis of President Wilson's twelfth point, one of his famous fourteen points set forth in his message to the Congress dated the 8th January, 1918, which is as follows:

"That the Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured of secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities now under Turkish rule should be assured security of life and autonomous development."

Now, ask the Muslims, have these promises and pledges been redeemed? It is the bare truth to say that in the treaty presented to the Turkish Plenipotentiaries on May 11th last and since signed by the Turkish Government, every single principle contained in the declarations I have cited above, has been palpably violated. Non-interference with the Muslim religious practices and obligations, non-molestation of Islamic Holy Places and respect for Turkish territorial and National integrity have all been *thrown over-board.*" This is the Muslim contention and the whole of India has accepted it as true.

So much then from the Mohammadan point of view

But there are in my judgement other issues also involved in the Turkish Peach Treaty which deserve consideration. I maintain that any further extension of the British Empire in Asia is detrimental to the interests of India and fatal to the liberties of the human race. The British have frequently used Indian troops to conquer various parts of Asia and Africa. For a long time there was an unwritten law which every European Chancellory considered binding on itself, that non-European troops were not be be used in any European war. This was abolished in the last war. African troops and Indian troops were used during and after the war by the Allies in Europe. Black troops were in occupation of Germany and possibly they may be still there. Gurkhas were, for some time, stationed in Ireland. I do not, of course resent the abolition of the invidious social. From the point of view, I may even welcome it, but surely it widens the scope of militarism. British suzeraintly in Arabia and British occupation of Mesopotamia involves the practical absorption of Persia and Central Asia and perhaps, later on of Afghanistan as well, into the British Empire. What has happened in Indian will happen in these countries too, *i.e.,* the general population will be disarmed and a number of them enrolled and drilled in the army. With the memory of the Dyer dabates fresh in our minds, let my countrymen imagine the effect of that procedure on their own liberties as well as those of the rest of the world. The prospect of having Arabian, Parsian and Afghan Regiments in India cannot be pleasant to those of us who are working for the freedom of this country. It may be said that the contingency is very remote and fanciful. I am afraid I cannot agree in that view. What is remote today becomes near tomorrow. If the British Imperialist has no scruples in using Indian troops in Egypt, Persia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Central Asia, why will he have any in using the troops he raises in these countries against us? The Hindu-Muslim problems will become ten time more troublesome and dangerous, if this turn out to be true.

Then there is another aspect of the question. If the Muslim population of these countries continues to resist British attempts at occupation which they are likely to do for years, the Indian army will be in constant requisition to fight their battles in those regions, which means a constant and never ending drain on our resource, both human and economic. The best interests of India, therefore, require that the Muslim countries in Western Asia should remain free and independent.

Their amalgamation in the British Empire even under the pretence of monetary jurisdiction, is likely to be extremely harmful to us. We know what these mandates really mean. The British have to maintain 80,000 troops in Mesopotamia and the French the same number in Syria. They have spent money like water on these territories even after the war. This is not being done for the benefit of these backward countries. Several wars are going on at this minute in what were Turkish territories before.

It may be contended that this view ignores the league of Nations and the United States. Well, gentlemen, there is not such thing as the League of Nations. Great Britain and France are the League. As for the United States, they are averse to any entanglements in foreign politics. They will not raise their little finger to save the liberties of the world unless theirs are in danger.

But it may also be said that this view ignores the possibility of Labour coming into power in Great Britain. Well, so long as Labour does not actually come into power it will be foolish for us to count upon the contingency in deciding what attitude we shall take on current problems, which brook no delay. For the present it seems that Junkerism and Militarism have obtained a fresh lease of life in Great Britain. For evidence one has to read carefully the speeches made in the course of the Dyer debate in both the Houses of Parliament. These speeches would not have been delivered in 1917 and 1918.

The question then resolves itself into the following

(a) Are we voluntarily and of our frame will be going to acquilsce in British Junkerism crushing Muslim liberties in Western Asia, and trample upon Indian religious sceptibilities without joining our protect with that of our Muslim countrymen against this immoral and unjust attempt?

(b) Are we to sit silent and let the British Junkers ride rough shod over the pledges under which they obtained our country help in the war against Turkey?

(c) Are we going to lose this opportunity of cementing the Hindu-Muslim *Entents* for the common purpose of Indian liberties in India, and Muslim liberties in Muslim countries?

(d) We, of the Indian National Congress, have always believed that the fabric of Indian liberties cannot be built safe and secure except upon the foundation of a close understanding between the two communities. The British bureaucrats have

> from time to time been deliberately playing the one against the other, and for a time they succeeded. Now in the time for us to convince our Muslim brothers that we were and are sincere in our desire for Muslim friendship. The bureaucrats now want to play the Hindus against the Muslims. In fact they were already at the game. It was the spectacles of Hindu-Muslim unity at Amritsar that finally exasperated Sir Michael O'Dwyer and drove him mad. The Hindu-Muslim unity was declared to be anti-British for no reason whatsoever except that to Anglo-Indian bureaucrats, it was an unpleasant spectacle. It was not anti-Indian when they freely used the Muslims to denounce the Hindus, but it became anti-British, the moment Muslims began to fraternise with the Hindus. Such is the mentality of so many of the Anglo-Indian bureaucrats.

I do not believe there are any Indian Muslims who want Muslim sovereignty in India, but if there be any such we should not be afraid of them. If it came to it, we know how to defend our liberties with or without British aid, How long are we going to be afraid of shadows and be deceived by imaginary fears set before us as a justification of despotic rule? But all this is on the assumption that there is going to be a fight. I for one do not believe that there is any likelihood of one. The Muslims of India do not want to turn out the British; even if they wanted it they could not do so. What they need and ask for is our moral and constitutional support in the present crisis regarding the Khilafat, and we should have no hesitation in giving it to them unreservedly.

I think it is a perfectly legitimate and constitutional demand that the Indian troops should no more be used anywhere outside India. They were taken out to defend the Empire when the empire was in danger. The war which threatened the whole empire is over the the troops sent by the Dominions have returned to their homes. So should ours. The Indian army exists to defend the Indian Empire and not for an aggressive imperial policy of extension and expansion.

As to how far the Hindus should go with their Muslim countrymen in the latter's campaign of non-co-operation is a question which it is for you to discuss and decide. All that I can say at this stage is that we should go as far as we can, consistently with our duty to the country, even if we have to suffer. The Hindu-Muslim unity betokens the dawn of a new day in the history of India and it will be extremely foolish

and short-sighted to throw this chance which only comes once perhaps in a century on the bidding of those who worship at the Shrine of Dyerism.

The prospect of Hindu-Muslim unity has already brightened the horizon and outlook of many an Indian who had taken to despair. It has cheered many a dying patriot at Amritsar and other places.

Mr. Maqbul Mohammed of Amritsar has in this evidence before the Congress Commissioners related two touching incidents which are worth mentioning here. Speaking of the Pathetic scenes he witnessed after the firing on the carriage bridge at Amritsar, on the 10th of April, he says:

"I witnessed many pathetic scenes and some gruesome sights. I saw a corpse actually with an eye-ball and the whole brain blown out. I heard a dying man gasping 'Hindu Mussalman ki Jai'[3]. A boy of 16 or 17 years of age lay wounded with his centrails propounding, having been hit on the belly. When Dr. Dhanpat Rai Salaria and I approached him, he whispered: 'I am dying, attend to my brethren'. 'Hindu-Mussalman ki Jai'. The next moment he died. Many similar instances of notable sacrifice I noticed when I was puring water into the mouths of the dying."

One word more and I will have finished this part of my address. It has been pointed out to me by well meaning friends that in supporting the Muslim claim for the maintenance of the Turkish Empire, I am advocating Imperialism to which I am otherwise so bitterly opposed. Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do desire the destruction of Imperialism but I do not desire the destruction of some Empires for the benefit of others. In my judgment, imperialism should be eliminated from the affairs of men and federation of sisterly states should take its place but so long as there are Empires, it is not in the interests of humanity that some of the should be dissolved for the enlargement and glorification of others. In the present state of world politics, the liberty of such states as are now being created by the dissolution of the Turkish Empire is not worth even a day's purchase. Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia are being absorbed in the British and French empires. Arabia and Kurdistan and Armenia cannot but be vassal States. Turkey itself, under the Treaty, is hardly in a better position than the Nizam of Hyderabad. In an unguarded moment Loyd George has said: 'We have got Constantinople. We have got Mesopotamia. We have got Palestine'. The Allies would

have been perfectly justified in insisting on establishing autonomous governments in all the component parts of the Turkish Empire, with a tie of federation joining them all for purposes of defence. But as the matter at present stands, Muslim independence in entirely gone. What Arabia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Syria, Kurdistan and Anatolia are getting is only a shadow and not the substance.

It is impossible to believe that the British and the France quarrels over the oil of Mosul are all disinterested and in the interest of the Muslim world. France, Italy and Great Britain have just made a treaty defining their economic interests in these territories, without consulting Turkey.

In my judgement the position of the Turks in Anatolia and Constantinople is worse than that of Germans in Germany and of the Austrians in Austria. It cannot be said that the Treaty secures them the sovereignty of Thrace or of the Turkish parts of empire or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor. In an article in the *Servant of India,* dated 19th August 1920, our friend Mr. C.F. Andrews has explained the meaning of that sentence. He quotes chapter and verse for the following opinion:

"Furthermore, we have now the fact brought to light, that every other Allies power appears to the British as paramount in Aleppo and Damascus and the Greeks as paramount in Smyrna and Andrianople. All the military defences of Constantinople are in the hands of the British. The Sultan himself, his Vizier, and his Cabinet sign dutifully and unanimously British orders. Recalcitrant officials have been effectively dealt with, financial control has been taken from the Turkish Government; and the Sultan has been made, not only a prisoner in his own palace, to all intents and purposes, but also practically a pauper and a mendicent, dependent on the hated foreigner for every penny of his income. It is this situation, which has made Europe regard the British military occupation as complete and lasting."

Reform Rules and Regulations

It is not my intention to detain you long over the Reform Rules and Regulations. The Parliament has finally passed them and they have already been put into operation. My attitude towards the Reform Scheme may be summed up in one sentence. It was one of partial elation in 1918, it sank into one of depression in 1919, it changed almost into

one of despair in 1920. From the frankness that characterised the statements made in the joint Report of the secretary of State and Viceroy, I concluded that they meant exactly what they had said. But soon after, the resolution relating to the Arms Act and the Local Self-government and the action of the government in the matter of admitting Indians into the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army, disillusioned me. Then came the Reform Act, with its reservations and limitations. The way in which the Secretary of State has been encumbering Indian finances and sanctioning increase after increase in the salaries and allowances of the Civil and Military service, the rules that have been mad for the selection of such Indian Civil Servants as are to be nominated in India, the latest development of policy in regard to currency, exchange, Reserve Bills, and last but not the least the tenderness which has been shown in dealing with the culprits in the Punjab tragedy have shattered all my hopes. The Reform Scheme as originally formulated, carried in its bosom the germs of disease. These germs have so fearfully developed since then that Colonel Wedgwood was perfectly justified in arguing that 'the people of India think and rightly think, that the rules and regulations and the decisions of the Joint Committee, have whittled down the recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and have made the Act, as it is put into operation now, far worse than the recommendation of the original Report led them to expect."

Now I must say that in one or two respects the Reform Act has made an improvement on the Original scheme, but on the whole it has disappointed the hopes that were raised by the latter. Nor is this any matter for wonder. The Rules and Regulations have been framed by the bureaucracy and represent their mind. The people of India have had very little to say in the drafting of them, and what little they said has gone unheeded. The restrictions imposed on the selection of candidates, the refusal to enfranchise the wage-earning classes and women, the constitution of the territorial constituencies and the almost autocratic powers given to the governors, have considerably reduced the value of the Reforms, even such as they were. The distinction between dismissed government servants and dismissed or suspended lawyers and between rural and urban constituencies is on the face of it absurd. The tenderness shown towards European commercial interests in significant and even more significant is the anxiety to keep out of the councils the leading victims of Martial Law. In the Punjab, Indian Trade and Commerce remains unrepresented and also the Depressed Classes and the wage

earners. The Rules of procedure are as reactionary as the ingenuity of the bureaucracy could make them. In infact, all round, so far as the Rules and Regulations are concerned, the bureaucracy have won and the Indian people have lost. May friend, Mr. V.J. Patel, has returned to India perhaps sadder and wiser for his troubles. He will, I am sure, throw much more light on the subject than I can. It has been found that blood is thicker than water. It has happened in this case as it did in the case of the Morely-Minto reforms, and it will continue to be like that, until the people of India make up their minds that what they want is the whole loaf and not merely half of it. I would have no objection to take even the half, provided I was sure that the half offered was not selected by the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is so adept in the art of mixing and cooking that the half which they propose of retain, contains all the nourishment of the whole leaving the other half worse than chaff. They manage it so skilfully that in the process of doughing they mix many a germ of disease in the half which they propose too let you have. It will be a marvel of good fortune, if with all the distinctions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs and Christians, of urban and rural, of Brahmans and Non-Brahmans, of residents and non-residents, of British subjects and those of Native States, of military and civil, made in the Rules and Regulations, we are still able to evolve a national spirit which will rise above these differences and consolidate us into one people, with a will to live and prosper as a free nation.

Non-Cooperation[4]

At the meeting of the All India Congress Committee, which sanctioned the convening of this special session, it was proposed by Mr. Gandhi that, as a protest against the Turkish Peace Treaty and the decision of the government in regard to the Punjab affairs, the Committee should recommend a programme of Non-co-operation to the country. Mr. Gandhi's programme of Non-co-operation includes the boycott of the reformed Councils. The All India Congress Committee considered that it was not within its competence to accept this proposition as it was opposed to the resolution of the Amritsar Congress relating to the Reform Scheme. It did not, at the same time, think it right to dispose of the mater without giving the country, as a whole, as opportunity of pronouncing on it. So it has referred the whole matter to this special session.

The question has since then been widely discussed in the country, on the platform and in the press. The Central Khilafat Committee under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi have already started their campaign of Non-co-operation. Some Provincial Congress Committees have, by majority of votes, accepted the principle of Non-co-operation but have recommended no action, pending the decision of this assembly. The question is very much agitating the public mind and has divided the country into two opposing camps. On both sides are ranged revered and respected leaders. Much feeling has been imported into the discussion. Under the circumstances, I have decided that, as President of this assembly, the proper course for me at this stage is to refrain from expressing any opinion on this subject.

I am aware that in the past Presidents have generally discussed all important political questions of the day in their presidential addresses, but then until very recently the country was practically unanimous on all questions which the Congress was expected deal with.

On the other hand, I believe there is an unwritten tradition that the Congress President, as the spokesman of the country, is expected to deal only with questions on which the country is unanimous or almost unanimous. There is a great deal of wisdom in that tradition. If the Congress is to maintain its character as a National Assembly, those who are selected for the office of the President must not be partisans in the ordinary sense of the term. Whatever his personal opinions, the President cannot be speaking for, and in the name of the country, if he makes a pronouncement on which the country is not unanimous. If his views do not happen to coincide with those of the majority, both he and the Congress would find the situation rather awakward. The President should not try to anticipate the decision of the Congress on a question on which the country is so sharply divided, as it is on the question before us. I, therefore, think that the best interests of the country and the traditions of the high office to which you have elected me, require that for the present, and in this address, I should say nothing on this much-debated question. In deciding to do so, I am adopting a course which, in my judgement, will enable you hereafter to maintain the national character of this assembly, and which will also have the additional character of not narrowing the field from which to select you future Presidents. In these days of active political life, when every new day the country may be expected to be confronted with problems on which there is room for differences of opinion among the best and the most

respected of the country's leaders, you cannot afford to select your Presidents from amongst men who have kept aloof from active political life. No person who is actively interested in the political life of his country can possibly remain neutral on any important questions on the merest chance of being called upon to reside over a session of the Congress. Nor would such an office-seeker be worthy of therein high office. The Congress Presidents must continue to be selected, as far as possible, from among men who have been in the forefront of the political life of the country. It should not be difficult for many among them, to be absolutely impartial when presiding over discussions of controversial subjects, in spite of their having their own personal opinions one way or the other.

In my humble judgement, the President of the Indian National Congress is the mouth-piece of the country only on question on which the country is unanimous or practically unanimous. Acting on this principle, the moment I decided to accept the honour to which I was called by the vote of the All India Congress Committee, I made up my mind to follow this course. Since then I have devoted much thought to it but I have not seen any reason to change my opinion. I hope and trust that my decision will meet with you approval. I have my personal opinion on the question involved in the programme of Non-co-operation but during the session of the Congress I will conduct the proceedings without taking sides.

This, however, does not prevent me from making some general observations on the subject. Before we consider Non-co-operation let us start with co-operation. Co-operation of the people with the government is based on one of the two assumptions, either that the government represents them, or that the government is there is protect their interest. Now in India the first of these two assumptions cannot hold good. The second is unhappily in the course of being shattered to pieces, if not already done. Co-operation with government, again, is of two kinds; one enforceable by law and, therefore, compulsory, for example the payment of taxes, or serving the army under conscription; the other is voluntary, for example, accepting government service or joining the Councils and so. In the case of the former, every refusal in punishable. As for the latter, there again you have to distinguish between co-operation which is obviously for the country's benefit and that which is not so. Co-operation determined solely or mainly by economic considerations can only be refused, if we can find economic alternatives.

Co-operation inspired by the considerations of honour and dignity can be changed. Last, but not the least, in the same class you may consider co-operation which gives you opportunities of serving your country by attacking the citadels of power and privilege from the inside.

Co-operation or refusal of it, then, must be judged by: (a) its obligatory or voluntary nature, (b) by its economic consequences, (c) by its inherent morality and (d) by its utility as a weapon of attack or defence.

Co-operation which is immoral or which makes your tool of a foreign bureaucracy or which leaves you no option but to give effect to their orders, stands on an entirely different footing from one which is obviously for the benefit of the country. Similarly co-operation, which is inspired by economic necessity stand on a different footing from the one which is solely or mainly based on considerations of honour and dignity. Then again you must consider if your refusal of co-operation proceeds from the desire to make an immediate effective impression on the government or from the motive of habituating the people to take their destiny in their own hands.

These, then, are the issues involved in the great question of Non-co-operation.

With your permission, I may also sound a general note of warning. We are passing through critical times. The minds of men are in ferment not only in this country of ours, but all over the world. Ideals, ideas, principles, convictions, sentiments, opinions, beliefs, creeds and all things, for which men have so far lived and fought are in the melting pot. Democracy is in the air but not that democracy which has brought the old world near its end in one great war. We are promised a new kind of democracy which would make no distinctions of colour, creed, caste, civilisation or culture. It would recognise no barrier between men and men which are the outcome of artificial social distinctions. It aims to raise the dignity of *man* as such. Under the circumstances, it is our duty to take into consideration more than we over did before, the interests of those who are for the present mere men and women, with no adjectives or prefixes before their names to enable them either to vote for the legislative assemblies of the country or to exercise any other political right, rising them a voice in the determination of their destinies. These men and women have begun to think, not that they did not that think before. Thank God, the masses of this country have never been unthinking animals. But what they used to think of before is different

from what they are thinking now. In one world, they have begun to think politically. Bitter experience, economic want, Rowlatt Bills and the Martial Law orders, have indeed not only taught them to think politically but also to think vigorously. They feel and realise more keenly and more actively than they perhaps ever did before, the difference between politically free men and those that are not so. In certain respects they are already ahead of those who are supposed to have a stake in the country. They feel that the men without property have a greater and more real stake in the country than men with property. The latter can go and settle and live wherever they like. The whole world is open to them. They are perfectly welcome in every civilised country. But the former can go nowhere expect as indentured coolies or as mercenary soldiers, privileges of which they are already quite sick. They want their country for themselves and they are keen on getting it as soon as circumstances permit. Under the circumstances, let me beg of you to think well before you decide the momentous question before you. Whatever you decide, be prepared to act up to your decision regardless of the consequences to your personal interest. Let not your decision be vitiated by considerations of personal or class interests.

The Masses

The general public, including the masses, are in no mood to be trifled with either by the government or by yourselves. They have waited sufficiently long, and the want immediate relief from economic want and from political Bondage. They may not understand complicated questions of finance, Currency, Military organisation, or the like. They may not be able to express opinions on abstract theories of state, but they do know that the country at present is not being governed in their interests. They are quite aware of the supercilious claims that are being put forward by British statesmen of all kinds from the O'Dwyers, Sydenhams and Summers of the Tory school to the Mestons, MacDonnels and Montagues of the democratic wing, that the British can and do look after the interests of the masses of this country even better than their educated countrymen. They know that when the question arises whether vote should be given to "the man on the soil, the man behind the plough, and the man whose life is a question between a crop and a crop" it is the British statesman who stands between them and their right. They know also that when the question arises of how best to spend the revenue raised from them, the people whose interests

get precedence over theirs, are the British civilian, the British Army man, the British manufacturer, the British banker and the British trader. They have seen through the newspapers now lavishly and generously the British Secretary of State has been solicitous of conciliating the British and the allied highly paid Indian servants of the Crown by giving them large increments in the princely salaries which they are already enjoying. While the British Government readily recognises that the man drawing from Rs. 500 to Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000 a months is hard hit by the increase in the cost of living, they shut their eyes to the fact that the said increase has cut the very ground from under the feet of ordinary wage-earner, the small agriculturist and the low-paid clerk. Last, but not the least, they have seen that, however tyrannical and oppressive the conduct of a British or Indian officer may be, the greatest punishment that can be meted out to him is to be compulsorily retired on a pension, a punishment which really falls on the tax-payer.

Just imagine, Ladies and Gentlemen, the inequity of the fact that the Indian tax-payer, whose women were insulted, whose crops were ruined, whose sons were flogged, who in his own person, or in that of his relatives or countrymen was humiliated, imprisoned and trodden under foot, is being made to pay for the comfortable living in Great Britian of a Michael O'Dwyer and Bosworth Smith. The other day, when I mentioned Bosworth Smith to a senior Punjab Civilian, he said, "that fellow was mad." Yet this same mad man not only ruled districts as big in size perhaps as Wales for a number of years, but still is to be a burden on the Indian revenue.

Believe me, Ladies and Gentlemen, the masses of this country are feeling the hardship of the present system of administration even more keenly than the educated Indians. I do not wish to be an alarmist but let me tell you quite frankly that if the government and the more comfortably placed among ourselves do not desire a revolution, they have to do something tangible, material and substantial, to remove these impressions and do it quick. The persecution of a few educated leaders will only make the situation worse. Educated leaders, on the whole, exercise a restraining influence. Remove that influence as was done by deporting Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal and the consequences will be disastrous.

The recent appointments of Lord Sinha and Mr. Sharma and Dr. Sapru, are excellent in themselves. I may even congratulate these gentlemen on their good luck and the government on their wisdom but

as remedies for the existing discontent they are hopelessly inadequate. A few years before, they might have thrilled our imagination but coming after the Punjab tragedy, they have naturally fallen flat. What people want are not appointments but the power to make them. As nominees of Mr. Montagu upon the people Lord Sinha and Messrs Shafi, Sharma and Sapru, are the servants of the British Ministry and not of the Indian people. We have every reason to be happy that some of our countrymen will share the loaves and fishes that were so for reserved only for the Britishers. We are also happy that they will have opportunities of serving their country in positions of responsibility and we are confident that they will discharge their duties very well and possibly to the credit of their country. All that may be true, yet we cannot help feeling that they are not the servants of the people of India, but their masters. Ladies and Gentlemen, what we want are not masters, imposed from without, but servants selected and honoured from within. The fact that Lord Sinha might get a salary of a lakh of rupees or more, or that our other friends might get salaries of Rs. 80,000 or so does not make us forget that about forty percent of the Indian revenues are spent on the maintenance of an army which is being used for aggressive imperial purposes, that millions of our countrymen and countrywomen are denied the ordinary amenities of human life and that they are being ruled by many who share the sentiments of O'Dwyer and Bosworth Smith.

Whatever you decide, remember these facts. The greatest need of the situation is the uplift of the masses, educational, social, as well as economical. Co-operation or Non-co-operation, that must be our aim and purpose and that must be our motive and inspiration. The masses must feel that we are working for them, and in their interests.

This leads me to another point. How far we must lead or be led by the masses? During the last six months since landed on the 20th February last, I have been in close touch with the masses of my countrymen. I have seen them in their thousands, in processions, at meetings and have met their representatives in private. I have seen their political awakening. It has exceeded my wildest expectations. Under the circumstances, we have to remember that in any programme we make, we must carry the masses alongwith us. While it will be wrong on our part to allow our deliberate judgment to be over-ruled by the masses, it will be equally unwise and perhaps, fatal to ignore them. There are some worthy men who are disposed to confound the people with mobs; they believe that true leadership requires the disregard of the opinions and

wishes of the people. With due respect to them I have no hesitation in saying that I do not share this belief. The masses change their character into mobs when they are inflamed by passion and anger, and are filled with a desire for revenge and as a rule this happens only under grave provocation. In that situation it becomes the duty of the leaders to be firm and save the situation by fact and skill, (The Punjàb leaders at Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala and Kasur tried to do this and would, I verily believe, have saved the situation but for the meddling and blundering of the bureaucracy who were out for producing a moral effect. The situation at Delhi was actually saved by the tactful leadership of Swami Shraddhanand and the equally wise behaviour of the Chief Commissioner. Such, however, are exceptional occasions). Under ordinary circumstances wise leadership involves understanding of the mass mid in a spirit of sympathy and respect. There may be occasions are not frequent nor many. I will, therefore, beg of my fellow Congressmen to bear these considerations in mind when deciding the question before them. We must arrive at a conclusion satisfactory to the general body of our countrymen in whose, interests and for whose welfare we are striving. We must not lose the lead of the people either by marching too far ahead of them, or by lagging-behind. Both will be fatal to the best interests of the country.

In their present mood, the masses demand that we shall do something over and above the mere passing of resolutions. But I believe they want also that we shall not lose such opportunities of alleviating their condition and helping them in their little things, as we possess or which the law allows us.

Despotism of a Democracy Worse than that of a Monarch

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I conclude, let me submit for your consideration one more thought. There is no such thing as benevolence in international politics, although there is such a thing as enlightened self-interest. The despotism of a democracy is in my judgement more fatal for subject people than that of an absolute monarch. The situation which you have to fact is from this point of view more difficult and complex than the one our ancestors has to lace even under the despotism or an Aurangzeb.

I would, therefore, very much like to warn my countrymen against being under any delusion as to the justice-loving nature or high-

mindedness of any democracy in the world; British or other. I was in this matter disillusioned by my first visit to England in 1905. Since then I have had many opportunities of studying the nature and the character of several democracies (British, American and Japanese) and you may take it from me, that although there are men and women in these democracies who are absolutely just and high-minded, guided by the purest of motives in dealing with subject peoples and backward races, the bulk of them, be they of England or of America, not to speak of Japan, know only one thing, namely, their own interest or the interest of their race. There are sections of these democracies whose won class interests require the destruction of militarism and imperialism and who will, therefore, sympathies with those of the subject people who are struggling for emancipation. It is wise on your part to ally yourselves with them. But place no faith in the professions of those who, however liberal, worship at the shrine of imperialism. The recent Parliamentary debate on the Punjab affairs ought to dispel all illusions if there were any still left, on that score. The Imperialist Liberals in the House of Commons with a few noble exceptions, showed no sympathy for the sufferings of the Punjabees, in spite of the eloquent pleadings of men like Mr. T.J. Bennet, Colonel Wedgwood and Mr. Ben Spoor Liberals in the House of Lords were among the most violent supporters of the military rule. It was a sight for the gods to see. Lords Curzon, Milner and Birkenhead pleading for conciliation and Lords Ampthill and MacDonnnel supporting brute force.

Have as many friends as you can have, among Englishmen and others, but have faith in yourselves alone.

It is much better to go rather slowly than deluded by promises held out to us by people who are not in a position to fulfil those promises, or who do not mean what they say or who promise in diplomatic language. Our progress depends more than anything else upon the volume and vigour of our own public opinion in this country. It will be wise to have this supplemented by the moral support of the great nations of the world, since by virtue of being a member of the League of Nations, we can now legitimately appeal to them for such moral support.

Our success will be determined by the extent of our earnestness, the spirit of self-sacrifice in the leaders, the spirit of self-denial in the rank and file, the power to lead righteously and to be led by religious men. The time has come when we must decide between the freedom of body and soul and the life of convenience and comparative ease which

is allowed to a few of us under the present system. If we decide former we must be prepared for the consequences. But if we choose the later we must not cry if we do not get the moon. That is the issue before you and I know I can leave this issue with confidence in your hands.

REFERENCES

1. Presidential Addresses delivered by Lala Lajpat Rai at the Special Session of the Congress held in Calcutta on 4 September 1920.
2. Held in 1919. Pandit Motilal presided.
3. Victeroy.
4. The movement was launched for about two years, 1920-22.

11

Address to College Students[1]

ALL INDIA COLLEGE STUDENTS CONFERENCE

President—Lala Lajpat Rai

Lala Lajpat Rai in the course of his Presidential address after referring to some of his services in connection with the national educational movement, said: from the very early days of my boyhood, I have been under the impression that no education under the aegis of a foreign government would be solely for the benefit of the country of the governed. As a general doctrine, we know that all governments first look to their own interests and they establish educational institutions in order to strengthen themselves. That is why educational thinkers of the world have questioned the wisdom of letting the State control the education of the children of the community. The object of a foreign government in starting educational institutions is not so much as the welfare of the country governed, but the welfare of their own Government and the strengthening of its hold upon the country governed. Leaving aside the ethics of the question, it is only natural that an imperial government should be dominated by imperial principles. We find the same principles dominating the educational policies of the different governments, *e.g.*, the monarchical form of government in Japan. Even under national government, governments for the time being dominate the educational policy of the country for strengthening their own hold upon the people and a foreign government is bound to do it to a greater extent and hence the duty of the people to guard against the insidious poison.

It was under that impression that we found 40 years ago that the education we were receiving was not likely to further the interests of nationalism, but was bound to hamper it, that it was emasculating, denationalising and creating a gulf between the educated and the non-

educated classes which went to the root of the welfare of the nation and we thought that it was an attempt to uproot the foundation by which the nation has stood from time immemorial and without which the nation could not exists an individual nation. Being unable and practically to start another system of our own, we decided to counteract the influences of that system by combining the two systems and establishing institutions which although prepared students for the University examination might, to a certain extent, remove defects which we complained of. It was under that impression that we started the D.A.V. College. Later on, as a result of discussion among our councillors some of the original founders came to the conclusion that they must cut away from University courses. I must say that those and similar institutions founded by other great patriots have failed in other objects; for somehow or other. Government and the University imposed conditions and restrictions upon them by which the object of the original founded was negatived and could not be fulfilled.

A Denationalising System

I hold the opinion that the educational system at present followed in government schools and colleges, aided and unaided, or controlled by official Universities, is a denationalising system. It is meant more to enslave us than to free us (Hear, hear). You cannot expect the jailor to prepare his own death warrant. We have been trying for the last 30 years to contract the evil influences of that system and maintain the independence of those institutions and we have to a certain extent succeeded in counteracting the evil influences, though not fully. There was a time in the history of our country, when, under the influence of education imparted in our schools, we were being taught and encouraged to look down with upon everything that it was indigenous. Everything Indian was held up to ridicule and we indulged in many an antic in order to show that we were just being civilised. We were taught everything Indian was barbaric and deserved contempt. Fortunate for us we have passed through that stage.

Warning Against Narrowness

Here I must sound a note of warning against going to the other extreme. We are standing the danger of going to the other extreme and considering everything Indian as absolutely perfect. Discussions on the value of civilizations are being carried on in a very narrow spirit and

authorities are quoted for propositions which on the whole do not justify the conclusions. I wish to warn against the danger of being carried off our feet by too much or excessive enthusiasm for everything we may consider nation. I must warn you, and so far as I am concerned, truth is truth, knowledge is knowledge and science is science. It is neither Eastern nor Western neither Indian nor European. We have to maintain our national continuity. That is absolutely necessary and we have therefore in all educational schemes that we evolve to copy all that is India. We do not want to be either European or an American nation and we want to remain an Indian national but quite up-to-date, absolutely up to-date (Here, here). We do not want to be mere copy of our past, but we want to build our future upon the historical structure of the past by making it stronger. That should be the policy underlying all schemes of education we may evolve. I want the younger generation to guard against the danger of a narrow cramping nationalism which will not unite India itself. You must remember that in India we have various communities following various religious and, to a certain extent, each has contributed its own quota of civilisation and culture to our country. In order to make stronger the Indian nationality composed of these various communities and cultures we shall have to look at these cultures with the eyes of a freedom, absolutely free to absorb all that is good in each culture, and contribute it to the joint culture of whole nation. True nationalism must be above the religious and sectarian influences.

Modern Civilisation

We are living in a world which is throwing away everyday new ideas. Nobody knows and understands the evil influences, the slave tendencies and the immoral nature of a great many institutions of modern civilisation. I have said in my book that modern civilisation is dying, and die to must, and it is clear that it is suffering from a disease from which it cannot be cured. You might dislike the moderns, abhor their social systems and institutions. You might not follow them. In fact they should not be followed particularly in the social and economic system, but at the same time you cannot shut your eyes to the fact that science and knowledge have made wonderful progress during the past 200 years. We shall be cutting our noses to spite our faces if we deprive ourselves of that stock of knowledge which the moderners have accumulated to the benefit of humanity at large. We should be

sufficiently strong in our moral culture, strong in our own indigenous culture, strong in our national sense, to assimilate all that and to use it for our own system rather than shun it. We ought to pursue science and knowledge from whatever culture it comes and use it with an open mind fully determined to assimilate it to our own system and make the smallest use of it for the purpose of freeing our country, getting it free for ever and maintain our freedom and individuality at any cost.

Students and Politics

Referring next to the creation and constitution of a students organisation for India he said: It is the creation not of confused brains but of dishonest brains (Here, here). You cannot prevent a man from forming political opinions on the burning questions of the day. If I were an administrator, I would rather let the students express themselves and be done with it, as sometimes we do, than create a situation as was created in Bengal 10 years ago by the Risley and other circulars. I do not care what the policy of government is on this subject. I find that there are good many among us who believe that students ought not to have to do anything with politics. I do not subscribe to that proposition at all. My conception of the need of an All India Students organisation is that while students ought to be free to study politics, have opinions on political questions and express them at times whenever there is need through their organisation, they ought to steer clear of politics (Here, here). Otherwise this organisation and the division among political parties will be carried into the students camp. That does not bind on you the duty to keep silence. You may express your opinions as a body whenever necessary on political questions. You may agree with some political organisation and disagree with others. I do not want you not to do it. But at the same time, if you really want to create and improve an organisation which should carry weight with the whole student community of India, you should aim at representative institutions. If you arrive at decisions which require certain action and conduct on your part you will follow that conduct which is expected of you by the resolutions. Even if some of you do not agree to follow.

Students and Non-co-operation

Answering to the question of student and Non-co-operation, he said: I shall state my position as it has evolved. So far I do not know how it is going to evolve in future (laughter). In my concluding address

at the Special Congress at Calcutta I said I was opposed to that item in the Non-co-operation programme which relates to boys in schools. Speaking on a later occasion, I have been expressing views which to some might seen inconsistent with that position, but which I never considered to be so (laughter). At Lahore I addressed a public meeting when I told students and other that I would welcome practically the abolition of the Arts College (hear hear). After that, whenever student approached me for advice, it was given under the following heads—Law Colleges, leave it at once. Medical, engineering, and technical schools, I said, did not leave. Arts Colleges, I said "consider the situation well and if you really feel the call of duty, leave the Arts Colleges, but under no delusion that some one is going to make provision in national schools established by the leaders of the National Congress.

Differences of the opinion there has been to a very great extent, not as to the spirit of the resolution, but as to working and the way in which it is to be carried out. We are agreed that we should do nothing on earth or heaven which will strengthen the hands of the bureaucracy. It is a positive sin to do anything to strengthen or continue this rule under the present or in any form. We are agreed that the present system of education does strengthen that object and wear also agreed that we should do what little we can, considering our present political responsibilities in the way of establishing institutions which might be free from official control both on the side of finance and education. I do not know whether we are agreed that national schools and colleges now established will be included to carry on the more important work of political propaganda in the country. We cannot afford to do that as we are out for proclaiming Swaraj in the shortest possible time and we cannot give our time and energy to a solution of the problem which requires both time and money. I have therefore been saying to my friends that we shall not incur any responsibilities and we shall not undertake any duties which will in any way militate against the great work which we have in hand. If we do that, we shall be frittering away our energies in enterprises the result of which might not be further achieved very soon.

Concentrate on Swaraj

We cannot devise a national system of education in this country without a national government and unless we achieve a national government we shall not be able to solve the problem of nationality.

That does not prevent us from making attempts at the solution of the problem in our own humble way making experiments. Therefore I am of opinion that all energy, time and resources we have at our disposal ought to be concentrated in achieving Swaraj, self-Government and freedom and emancipating ourselves from this government. I am perfectly willing to ask and encourage every student in any arts or law college to leave off the College, if he feels the call for duty, provided he is under no delusion (mind that, because I have seen that in my own place a provision is going to be made for his education either locally or imperially).

There is a great field for propaganda work for organising the nation for reviving industries and there is work to make honourable living without being traitors to our country. Put your hand to any work you find handy. I know that sometime back the sentence of Gandhi was ridiculed, *viz.*, that people ought to go and construct roadside work, in factories. My student friends, you ought to remember that one of the greatest defects of the present educational system is that it enables you neither to think independently nor act independently. Real education should aim to make you men, fit to think and act independently, in finding an independent work. Don't find yourselves in an embarrassing position by your white cloths. Go into the country find out any work you can lay your hand upon, make yourselves useful to the society and learn honesty. In my eyes, honest patriotic work in road-repairing is infinitely superior to a Deputy Collector's post. I want the youth of the nation to go forth into the villages and the factories, work with their hands in the spirit of comradeship along with the villages who are waiting for inspiration from you. So long as the educated community keeps itself aloof from the actual tillers of the soil and workers in factories, it shall never attain Swaraj. Swaraj will not be attained by the efforts of a new educated people, but by the whole nation which lives in workshops and on the soil. Therefore, it should be your duty, if you really feel the call of duty, not to question what shall be our career in the future?

Bogey of Careers

This bogey of career, coupled the bogey of academic careers, has spoiled the whole point of view of educational discussions. It is not the principal object of life to seek a career or to be an academic animal. The object of life is to be efficient as a citizen and member of society.

It is a viscous ideal which places excellence and fashions on a high pedestal. Anybody who can speak English well considers himself to be an enlightened and great man. I have found many a fool among those who can read and speak excellent English. It is an entirely false standard of education to desire to go down as a stylist. It is good piece of art, but it is not the main purpose of life. We ought to see the main purpose of life in education rather than see it in the fashion which places us on a false pedestal. I earnestly appeal to those of you who take Non-co-operation to go forth into the county, to leave the cities and central places of which you are so fond, to go into the villages, workshops and factories, live there and then give them the inspiration which you have derived from your education. Unless you do that, you are merely passing resolutions which would be mere sham. Infinitely slavish as we are, we will be adopting another vice, that is, of passing resolutions without putting them into operation. if you pass resolutions it is your duty to act up to it. Do not pass resolutions in the hurry of enthusiasm or to please someone. If you do that you will bring discredit on the whole movement and on the men whom you revere and you will also demoralise your nation if you pass resolutions only to advice others. For God's sake, we have had enough of them and we do not want the student's aid to add to that burden.

You must also consider before passing your resolutions whether you are prepared to withstand the beatings of your parents and all the nice arguments that they may put forward of career, of honours, emoluments and other things. Are you prepared to suffer and give up your fashionable habits? In that case go forth in the name of God and elevate your country. The country needs as many workers in the field as it can find. Workers are few. All of you can be absorbed in the great work that lies before us. As regards medical and engineering college are the two great strengths of the Indian Army and I have come to the conclusion whether it will not be advisable to follow the same course for these two department too. I have not formed my own definite opinions and so I cannot advise you now. But that is the trend of my thought lately.

Conclusion

In conclusion, he said: "It will be my duty to help you. I do not say guide you, in coming to a conclusion. Be absolutely tolerant of any differences of opinion that may exist. To me it matters little which way

you decide. As said already the decision of this Non-co-operation Resolution lies with others, *i.e.,* the Congress and you will be simply following the Congress."

He thanked them all once more for the honour done to him.

Proceedings and Resolutions

The Conference met again on the 26th December 1920, with Mr. Pickthal Editor of the *Bombay of Chronicle* in the chair. There was heated discussion on the boycott of government aided schools and colleges. Several speakers spoke in favour of and against the Resolution, Miss Sham Kumari Nehru supported the resolution for boycotting colleges and schools. After a long and heated discussion the president declare the resolution carried, to which a poll was demanded and a poll was taken by Provinces. The result of the poll was as followed: Madras' 40 for and one against; Bombay 87 for 22 against; Bengal 33 and 27 against; Central India, unanimous for; U.P. unanimous for; Bihar, unanimous for: Punjab almost unanimous for: Assam 5 for 7 against; Andhra, unanimous for" Central Provinces, 132 for 32 against. The following resolution was carried by an over whelming majority. "That in view of the nation's call and in consonance with the policy of Non-co-operation with government, as expressed in the resolution of the Calcutta Congress, this All India College Students Conference after deliberate consideration whole heartedly supports the immediate and unconditional boycott of government and government aided colleges and advises the college students of India to respond to it."

Several other resolutions appealing to the National leaders to bring into existence National Schools, urging the students to observe Swadeshi even at the sacrifice of giving up fashionable habits, sympathising with the Punjab students who suffered during the Martial Law regime, recommending Ayurvedic and Unani Medical Sciences and urging the use of Vernacular languages, were proposed and carried unanimously.

The president, in concluding the proceedings, paid a glowing tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai's work and removed certain misunderstandings which prevailed among the students and brought the meeting to a close, thanking the organisers.

The following resolutions were adopted by the All India College Students' Conference

(1) This conference records its profound sense of grief at the

demise of our great leader and revered patriot Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the pioneer of Indian Nationalism, and a staunch advocate of national education and further resolves that the qualities of patriotism, courage, self-sacrifice and devotion to the motherland of which he was the unique embodiment, will never be the guiding principle to the students of this country.

(2) This conference puts on record its profound sense of grief at the demise of Shaikhulhind Moulana Mahudal Hussain whose great and meritorious services to the cause of Islam and in the direction of the Hindu Moslem unity will in its opinion be a source of inspiration to the Youths of the motherland.

(3) "That in view of the nation's call and in consonance with the policy of Non-co-operation with government, as expressed in the resolution of the Calcutta Congress, this All India College Student's Conference, after deliberate consideration, whole-heartedly supports the immediate and unconditional boycott of government and government-aided colleges and advises the college students of India to respond to it.

(4) The conference looks to the National leaders to bring into existence in every province and at an early date the National College conducted on national lines affiliated to the National Universities for the conveniences and benefit of those student Non-co-operators who might wish to continue their education. The Conference further hopes that provision for technical education as far as possible be made in such institutions to enable the needy student to undertake an independent calling in order to maintain a plain and decent living for himself and those dependent on him.

(5) This conference suggests to student Non-co-operators to take up the following programme of national work according to their strength and ability: (a) to take up propaganda work of the Indian National Congress, if possible after training, under the guidance of local leaders and to popularise it, (b) plain and decent living for himself and those dependent specially in village, (c) to form themselves into Sewa-Samities or volunteer corps for social service, (d) to prepare

themselves for the role of National Police to maintain peace and order in cities, towns and villages, as the case may be, (e) to take up primary education in village, (f) to form temperance unions in order to check the habit of the people, (g) by all honourable means, to learn the art of weaving and handspinning and to promote the same in villages and towns.

(6) This conference is of opinion that student Non-Co-Operation Boards be established in every province with a view to keep record of doings of, and seek to render all possible province and also to settle a line of action according to local circumstances.

(7) This conference is of opinion that local leaders of different provinces should institute boy-scout movement on a national and independent basis with a view to turn the young generation into a militia.

(8) This conference urges upon the students of India to scrupulously observe Swadeshi even at a sacrifice.

(9) This conference urges upon the students of India to avoid all luxurious and fashionable habits and to adopt a plain, cheap and virtuous life.

(10) This conference fully sympathies with the students of the Punjab who suffered hardship during the Martial Law regime.

(11) This conference recommends that the indigenous system of Ayurvedic and Unani medical sciences be encouraged by all true lovers of India and urges upon students going for medicine that they should take keen interest in their study more than in foreign systems of medicine owing to their inherent beneficial qualities and cheapness and further appeals to the parents to help the students in such pursuits of knowledge.

(12) This conference further request the All India Ayurvedic Conference and promoters of the Unani medical science to carry on a vigorous and patient research to recover the lost treasures of both sciences.

(13) As thinking and speaking in English not only denationalises the student population and cramps his originality but also mars his progress intellectually and mentally, this

Conference urges upon the students of India to use only their vernacular is their correspondence, daily talk and provincial deliberations.

(14) This conference accepts the constitution drafted by the Reception Committee of the All India College Students Conference and as amended by the Subjects Committee.

REFERENCE

1. H.N. Mitra, *op cit.*, Vol. II, 1920, pp. 241 ff.

12

Views on Congress Creed[1]

At the Nagpur Session of the Indian Congress held on 28 December 1920, Lala Lajpat Rai, while seconding the resolution moved by Mahatma Gandhi on the change of the Congress Creed,[1] said:

Mr. President, brother and sister delegates, ladies and gentlemen: I have been commissioned to second this proposition in English and I will carry out that commission. I consider this resolution to be of the greatest importance not only at the present juncture but also for the future of my country. The creed of the Congress has a history of its own which with your permission I intend to relate in a few words. Most of you who have studied the history of the Indian National Congress know how the split at Surat took place in 1907. I took part in the proceedings of that Congress and I was one of the unfortunate causes that were at that time relied upon, at least superficially, to be at the bottom of that split and therefore I know somewhat how that split came about. One of the fundamental differences at that time between the two parties since then called the Moderates and Extremists was that a few of the so called Extremists, believed that it would only work for the complete independence of Indian and was not for its retention within the British Empire. That was one of the fears that underlay the proceedings that led to that spirit. After the Convention was created at Surat, we met at Allahabad sometime early in 1908 to consider the draft of this creed and to pass the constitution. I was present at that time and I am prepared to tell you that even at that time I was opposed to the creed and to the requirement of its being signed before any body could attend a meeting of the Indian National Congress. My reason for that opposition was this: Not that I believed at that time that we had either the means or the will to work for complete independence or for taking out India from the British Empire, but I thought that none of us had the right to exclude from the deliberations of this Congress any body the pitched his ideal

so high as the complete independence of his mother country and I tell you that one chief point for consideration before me was that no assembly in India could be called 'national' which precluded by virtue of this creed a man of the purity and of the ability and of the absolute disinterestedness and high patriotism of the nation as Aurobindo Ghosh. That was my reason, because I new there were some friends at that time who were not prepared to sign that creed. However, at that time the public opinion of the country was not in favour of going so far and therefore the creed was passed and adopted. Now about 12 or 13 years have rolled by, and since many events have happened which practically make it compulsory, almost obligatory, to change the creed and I am prepared here to say that it could not be changed in a better way than it has been done. I say it is only a development of the policy which was adopted at the last session in passing the resolution of non-co-operation, you could not certainly exclude from the deliberations of this Congress those people who were not prepared to sign the old creed. Even at the present moment I am not prepared to say that the majority of this assembly or the vast majority of thinking people in the country are prepared to say that we will at once go in for complete independence or that we are going to fight for it at once or that we shall not remain within the British Commonwealth, if that were possible for us to do. Gentlemen, I want here to take this opportunity of pointing out that we shall be lacking in frankness, we shall be lacking in patriotism, we shall be lacking in honesty and truth, if we are not to announce in the clearest possible terms the change of mentality that has come over the country. We are here assembled in this Congress not to express our individual views but, according to the old traditions of the country, to focus public opinion of this country and to place in the form of a resolution. What does the change in the creed aim at? A notice to the British public and the British Government that although we do not at the present moment aim, directly aim, to go out of the British Empire of what we may call the British Commonwealth but if we remain in the British Commonwealth or the British Empire we shall not remain at the dictation of anybody. We shall remain there by our free choice and free will, and that free choice and free will we can only exercise and express, when we are allowed to do so by the legitimate and peaceful means.

Britain's Broken Pledges

There are friends here from the British Isles for whom I have got the greatest respect and I want them to convey this message from this

assembly to the British people that as a people dealing with another people we are in no way hostile to them. We are not actuated by any motives of enmity or hostility but at the same time we want them to tell their government that this country has absolutely no faith in the justice-loving instincts of Great Britain not only that but I want it to be said from this platform that we have lost all faith even in the sanity of British statesmanship. I consider British statesmanship, when it sent that dispatch on the affairs of the Punjab in which they praised or took upon themselves to pay a tribute of praise to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, by those sentences practically declared its bankruptcy. We want it to be taken from this platform not only then but even previously we had lost faith in British statesmanship but that was the chief sealing point which has sealed out opinion of British statesmanship and British justice.

The other day I read telegram in which it was stated that on the House of Lords, Lord Selbourne expressed his resentment at the conduct of those Indians who were disseminating in this country that the British pledges and British words were not to be relied upon. Of course he wanted the Government of India to carry on a counteracting propaganda to meet those charges and to contradict those people who were making those charges. I, in this open Congress, in this assembly of twenty thousand of my country men, containing some of the cream of this country, want to tell lord Selborne that we have absolutely no faith in British pledges or British words. I want him to open up the pages of Indian history, he will find that the British Rule in India is a continuous record of broken pledges and unfulfilled promises. Does he want us at the present moment to continue to delude ourselves into the good faith of British pledges and British promises? We do not want to go into the past history or to open up the past record of British connection with India.

But I challenge any one that not a single decade of British Rule in India has gone about without a breach of faith and breach of promises and breach of pledges. Pledges made most solemnly in the name of His Majesty, or Her Majesty, promises made clearly, unambiguously by the responsible government of Great Britain, have not only remained, most of them, unfulfilled but they have been actually broken. I will not go over past history of how Lord Dalhousie simply swept away those pledges and promises but the recent history is enough to furnish me with instances of these broken pledges. It will be fresh to the memory of my countrymen how Lord Curzon tried to sweep away practically

the Queen's proclamation by saying that it was a piece of Rhetoric. Lord Curzon was not an irresponsible politician. He was the Viceroy of India and at the present moment Foreign Secretary of the British Empire. Then, we come later on to His Most Excellent, to His Greatest Excellency, the present Prime Minister of England, Mr. Loyd George. If Lord Selbrne had been present here. I would have asked him to point to me a single member of the present British Cabinet whose words carry greater weight than those of a grocer (A "voice, or a milkman" and another voice "not grocer but gambier"). Mr. Lloyed George embodies in himself the chivalry, the nobility and the patriotism and power of the British Empire and we know how he deceived the Indian Mussalmans and how he broke those pledges to the ear, still maintaining that he had never broken his pledges. I can understand an honest man saying that those pledges were made under stress of necessity and that politics knows no law and therefore they can be broken with impunity but what about the honesty of a man who says that he has stuck to those pledges while the whole world says that he has broken them to the ear.

Coming down from His Excellency the Prime Minister we shall examine a little the ethical frame of mind of His Excellency the War Minister. Are we going to place any faith in Mr. Winston Churchill who is spoken of as the future Viceroy of India (no, no)? Are we going to place faith in the word of Mr. Balfour (no, no)? May I ask somebody to point out to me who among the British Cabinet is entitled to our confidence? (none) (a voice: Lord Milner). My friend suggests here Lord Milner. Mr. Satyamurti suggests Mr. Montagu, (no, no, never) (a voice O'Dwyer). Under the circumstances it is absolutely futile for any British statesman to expect that India can place any more faith or any confidence in the words and pledges of British statesman.

Change of Creed: A Notice to Britain

Very well, you are right in saying "no" but by this change of creed we want to give notice to the British public and British Government that it is our deliberats considered opinion. We are not even now averse to remain within British Commonwealth, if we are allowed to remain, our terms by our free choice and by our free will we will decide that question, then the time comes, on its merits in the light of our own interests and not by coercion or fear. Ladies and Gentlemen, that is a kind of notice however innocent, however harmless, which we give to the British nation in the British Government and I tell you we should be false to our country, we should be absolutely failing in our duty, if at the present day we fail to give that clear notice.

To the British people, and British Government, I want to say one word about the play on the words "Empire of Commonwealth." May I ask if there is any British Commonwealth? (no). (Mr. Holford Knight "not yet"). Mr. Holford Knight says not yet. Very well. Then where is the British Commonwealth in which we can remain on terms of equality (a voice: nowhere). As to the British Empire I would rather be slave than willingly consent to be a part of an empire which enslaves so many millions of human beings. I do not want to share the rights and responsibilities of such an empire. There are many friends of mine for whom I have the greatest respect and who are very much revered in this country for their past services. They are not in the Congress now, who are very fond of claiming to be the future partners of this Empire. If they want to be partners in an Empire which is based and founded upon the blood and loss of liberty and rights of many millions of human beings they may like it but I for one would not like to be in that. It is very flattering, it is very gratifying to some people, it is a high honour to be citizens of such an empire. First of all that empire denies to me the rights and the privileges of citizenship. But even if I have that citizenship I would be ashamed of it and never be proud of it. Therefore, I need not dilate very much upon this point. I want to tell you that it is absolutely necessary for us, in the present state of affairs in this country to be absolutely frank.

Making of Swaraj

Some of my friends say that is a dubious phrase 'swaraj.' If they mean by this that the phrase has two meanings within or without the British Empire, without making it clear, I will say they are right because the word has been deliberately used for the purpose of enabling us to remain within this Commonwealth if we choose when that Commonwealth has been established or go out of it when we like. In that sense that world may be construed to have a double mening. It has not double meaning but it is a word which leaves the choice of the two conditions to us. That is the first part of the resolution. "Attainment of Swaraj by the people of India."

Need of Non-Violence

The other part of the Resolution deals with the means. There are some friends here for whom I have great respect, who think that we might have very well omitted any mention of the means. I am afraid I

cannot agree with them. The reason is this, I am one of those who believe that every Nation has, when the occasion arises, the inherent right of armed rebellion against a repressive, autocratic government but I do not believe that we have either the means or even the will for such an armed rebellion at the present time. I will not discuss the future possibilities but I want that my countrymen should not have any misconception or misgivings about the fact that the leaders of the National Congress do not want them to resort to violence for the attainment of any of the objects which have been laid before them. It is absolutely necessary in the present state of feeling in the country to lay emphasis on that point because passions have been roused, feelings have been excited, and there is a very bitter resentment in the minds of the people against the doings of the British Government, and therefore the more we emphasise this point the greater the need of it and the greater the use of it. It cannot be too frequently and too sufficiently emphasised that we entirely abhor and dislike any kind of violence used against individuals or used rather in a fit of passion or anger or resentment.

Recent Elections

I want to congratulate my countrymen in carrying on the very onerous duty in performing a very difficult task in connection with the recent elections. There have been so few untoward events. Events have happened here and there which we deplore, which we condemn and repudiate but my wonder is that they have been so few and not more. The feeling and the excitement, the anger and the passion of the country have been so much roused of late that it would be very difficult to control it by any human being. Consider that the country has displayed, on whole, (mark my words "on the whole") a sobriety and appreciation of the situation for which we may well congratulate ourselves. I want to express that at least in my province with the exception of a few of these untoward events we have within the last six month, within the last one year, in spite of the gravest possible provocation, maintained peace which does great credit to the Punjabis. If ever therefore in the future there is any exhibition of violence, there is any recrudescence of disorder, it will not be we who shall be responsible for it, but the British Government. (A voice: European Association). I would not even mention their name. But I want to tell the Bureaucracy that if they continue in their policy of repression-cruel, uncalled for repression-absolutely unjustified in the face of the circumstances, they shall be responsible for the consequences and not any of us.

Repression in the Punjab

You will pardon me for this brief reference to the Punjab, particularly because I find that although the same kind of speeches are being delivered all over the country, the same kind of things happening all over the country, the same kind of feeling being exhibited and the same kind of language being used all over the country, well, it is the Punjab Government that decides to introduce the Seditious meetings Act. I believe and I want to say this from this platform that without making any reflection upon the personal character of the immediate rulers of the Punjab. I think that in the whole of British India there is no administration which is more stupid, which is absolutely more unsatesmanlike and lacks in the quality of statesmanship than the administration of the Punjab (a voice: Delhi). Delhi is only a corollary of the Punjab. We, with the help of our friends, of our leaders and countrymen from the other provinces, are determined to do our level best to maintain peace in the provinces, to work on peaceful lines, to go on working as much as we can without giving any reasons, any occasion, for disturbance or disorders (a voice: you will not be allowed). But if the British Bureaucracy goes on making blunders after blunders, stupid and absolutely unreasonable, we do not know what might happen in that province. They say they want repression in that province because it is full of gun powder. Who has made it into gunpowder? It is they who are responsible for it. We repudiate the charge unequivocally and unreservedly. I won't detain you, gentlemen, any more but I just want to point out to you that for those very reasons and those very circumstances it is absolutely necessary that we should stick to the language of the resolution that has been proposed before you by Mahatmaji, that is "by peaceful and legitimate means," and having accepted that Resolution as he told you in his concluding address, our duty does not end there. Just I want to tell you one word. The path may be long and tedious. The goal may be distant though I hope it is not. The task may be difficult. But there is nothing impossible before a nation of three hundred and fifteen millions. If we decide to do our duty, to do our duty manfully, fearlessly, in a spirit of selfless devotion to the interest of the country , what we are aiming at, we shall achieve at no distant time and if any English men or if any English Party or if any English public helps us in attaining that object the glory shall be theirs. We are at perfect liberty and from our hearts we desire to work in co-operation with such people. But I may tell you that we may place every

faith in the words of an English gentleman but we can no longer place any faith in the words of British Statesmen (loud and prolonged cheers and cries of Bandemantaram).

REFERENCE

1. H.N. Mitra, ed., *The Indian Annual Register,* 1920. Part III, pp. 172-79.

13

Historical Background

On 31 October 1929, the Viceroy issued a statement soon after his return to India from England where he had gone to seek advice from the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for political problems facing Indian people and the *Raj*. 'I have returned from England where I had the opportunity of a prolonged consultation with His Majesty's Government. Before I left this country I said publicly, as the King Emperor's representative in India, I should hold myself bound to tell my fellow countrymen, as faithfully as I might, of India's feelings, anxieties and aspirations. In my endeavours to discharge that undertaking I was assisted by finding, as I had expected, a generous and sincere desire, not only on the part of His Majesty's Government, but on that of all persons and parties in Great Britain, to hear and appreciate everything that it was my duty to represent. These are critical days when matters by which men are deeply touched are in issue and when, therefore, it is inevitable that political feelings should run high, and that misunderstandings which would scarcely arise in conditions of political tranquillity, should obtain a firm foothold in men's minds. I have nevertheless faltered in my belief that, behind all the disquieting tendencies of the time, there lay the great mass of India opinion, overflowing all divisions of race, religion or political thought, fundamentally loyal to the King Emperor and, whether consciously or not, only wanting to understand and to be understood.

'On the other side, I have never felt any doubt that opinion in Great Britain, puzzled as it might be by events in India, or only perhaps partially informed as to their true significance, was unshaken in its determination that Great Britain should redeem to the full the pledges she has given for India's future. On both countries the time have laid a heavy and in some ways a unique responsibility, for the influence in the world of a perfect understanding between Great Britain and India

might surely be so great that no scales can give us the measure either of the prize of success or the price of failure in our attempts to reach it.

'In my discussions with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, it was inevitable that the principal topic should have been the course of events in India. It is not profitable on either side to discuss to what extent, of with what justification, the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission, two years ago, has affected the general trend of Indian thought and action. Practical men must take the facts and the situations as they are, and not as they would have them to be.

'Sir John Simon's Commission, assisted as it has been by the Indian Central Committee, is now at work on its report, and until that report is laid before the Parliament, it is impossible, and even if it were possible, it would in the view of His Majesty's Government clearly be improper to forecast the nature of any constitutional changes that may subsequently be proposed. In this respect, every British Party is bound to reserve to itself complete freedom of action. But what must constantly engage our attention, and is a matter of deep concern to His Majesty's Government, is the discovery of means by which when the Commission has reported, the broad question of British Indian constitutional advance may be approached in cooperation with all those who can speak authoritatively for opinion in British India.

'I would venture to recall some words which I used in addressing the Assembly eight months ago in a reference to the then existing political situation. On the one side, I said it is as unprofitable to deny the right of Parliament to form its free and deliberate judgement on the problem as it would be short-sighted of Parliament to underrate the importance of trying to reach a solution which might carry the willing assent of political India. We shall surely stray from the path, at the end of which lies achievement, if be let go either one or other of these two main guiding principles of political action. But there has lately emerged, from a totally different angle another set of consideration which is very relevant to what I have just stated on this matter to be desire of His Majesty's Government.

'The Chairman of the Commission has pointed out in correspondence with the Prime Minister, which I understand is being published in England, that, as their investigation has proceeded, he and his colleagues have been greatly impressed in considering the direction which the future constitutional development of India is likely to take with the importance of bearing in mind the relations which may, at some

future time. develop between British India and the Indian States...He suggested that what might be required after the reports of the Statutory Commission and the Indian Central Committee has been made considered and published, but before the stage is reached of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, would be the setting up of a Conference in which His Majesty' Government should meet representatives both of British India and of the states, for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would later be the duty of His Majesty' Government to submit to Parliament.

'With these views I understand that His Majesty's Government are in complete accord for, while they will greatly desire when the time comes, to be able to deal with the question of British Indian political development under conditions most favourable to its successful treatment, they are, with the Commission, deeply sensible of the importance of bringing under a comprehensive review the whole problem of the relations of British India and the Indian States. Indeed, an adjustment of these interests in their view is essential for the complete fulfillment of what they consider to be the underlying purpose of British policy, whatever, may be the method for its furtherance which Parliament may decide to adopt.'

The Viceroy further explained thus: 'In the full realization of this policy, it is evidently important that the Indian States should be afforded an opportunity of finding their place, and even if we cannot at present exactly foresee on what lines this development may be shaped, it is from every point of view desirable that whatever can be done should be done to ensure that action taken now is not inconsistent with the attainment of the ultimate purpose those, whether in British India or the States, who look forward to some unity of all India, have in view. It is not necessary for me to say how greatly I trust that the action of His Majesty's Government may evoke response from and enlist the concurrence of all sections of opinion in India, and I believe that all who wish India well, however and whoever they are, desire to break through the webs of mistrust that have lately clogged the relations between India and Great Britain...'[1]

On 1 November, a conference of prominent leaders including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, M.A. Ansari, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maharaja of Mahmudabad, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, Vithalbhai Patel, T.A.K. Sherwani, Shuaib Quereshi, Vallabhbhai Patel, J.M. Sen Gupta, Lala Dunichand, Mohamed Ali and

B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya was convened at the residence of Vithalbhai Patel, president of the Central Assembly. It was decided to ask Gandhi, Taj Bahadur Sapru and Jawaharlal Nehru to prepare drafts regarding the statement which they should issue. The drafts were considered in another meeting. It was understood that Sapru's draft did not insist on amnesty being made a condition precedent to the Acceptance of the offer, while Gandhi held that the conference was not possible without this being done. As regards the personnel of the conference, Sapru recommended effective representations for such political organizations as the Congress, the Liberal Federation, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, while Gandhi wished a predominant representation for the largest political organization in the country. Both of them, however asked for Dominion form of government under constitution. Jawaharlal Nehru demanded not only the release of all political prisoners and under-trials including those charged with murder, but also wished the British government to apply for the extension of time of the ultimatum given by the Calcutta Congress. He justified his plea on the ground that he had firm belief in independence for India. Nehru first stood out as a dissentient, but later agreed after much persuasion to sign the statement which ran as follows:

'We the undersigned have read with careful consideration the Viceregal pronouncement on the question of India's future status among the nations of the world. We appreciate the sincerity underlying the declarations, as also the desire of the British Government to placate the Indian opinion. We hope to be able to tender our cooperation to His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve scheme of Dominion Constitution suitable for India's needs but we deem it necessary that certain acts should be done and certain points should be cleared so as to inspire trust and ensure the cooperation of the principle political organizations in the country.

'We consider it vital for the success of the proposed conference that: (a) a policy of general conciliation should be definitely adopted to induce a calmer atmosphere. (b) Political prisoners should be granted a general amnesty. (c) The representation of progressive political organizations should be effectively accrued and that the Indian National Congress, as the largest among them, should have predominant representations.

'Some doubt has been expressed about the interpretation of the paragraph in the statement made by the Viceroy on behalf of His

Majesty's Government regarding Dominion Status. We understand, however, that the Conference is to meet not to discuss when Dominion Status is to be established, but to frame a scheme of Dominion Constitution for India. We hope that we are not mistaken in thus interpreting the import and implications of the weightly pronouncement of H.E. the Viceroy.

'Until the new constitution comes into existence, we think it necessary that a more liberal spirit should be infused in the government of the country, that relations of the Executive and the Legislature should be brought more in harmony with the object of the proposed Conference, and that greater regard should be paid to constitutional methods and practices. We hold it to be absolutely essential that the public should be made to feel that a new era has commenced even from today and that the new constitution is to be but a register of that fact. Lastly, we deem it an essential factor for the success of the Conference that it should be convened as expeditiously as possible.'

The manifesto was signed among others by Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Jawaharlal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Annie Besant, V.J. Patel, M.A. Ansari, B.S. Moonje, Sarojini Naidu, T.A.K. Sherwani, Syed Mahmud, M.S. Aney, J.M. Sen Gupta, B.C. Roy, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Sardul Singh, Khaliquzzaman and Jagatnarain Lal.

But leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose, Saifud Din Kitchlew and Maulana Abdul Bari declined to sign the manifesto. They opined that the Viceroy's pronouncement contained nothing over which they could enthuse. 'This will be borne out if we examine the two important commitments made by His Excellency the Viceroy on his pronouncement, *viz.*, (I) definition of responsible government as Dominion Status and (2) provision of a conference between representatives of the British Government on the one side and representative of British India and Indian States on the other side.

'With regard to the first we would like to point out to those who may feel enthusiastic over the Viceregal announcement that there is no mention in that statement as to when Dominion Status will be granted. We, however, stand unequivocally for complete Independence not as a distant goal but as the immediate objective, and if Dominion Status were granted by 31st December 1929, we would still stand out boldly for complete Independence. We gave expression to this view at the last session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta, and it will be our

duty to reiterate it when the Congress assembles at Lahore in December next.

'With regard to the second commitment, we feel that the Conference proposed is not really a Round Table Conference, and we would request our countrymen not to give it that dignified appellation. The machinery and procedure laid down in connection with the Simon Commission for determining how then Indian Constitution should be amended are to remain intact. It is not clear whether the Conference will be confined to representatives of the British Government on the one side and representatives of Indian Nationalist on the other. Nor is it known that the conclusions to be arrived at by the Conference will be final and binding on both the parties. In the circumstances, the proposed Conference cannot by any stretch of imagination be called a Round Table Conference.

'It may be argued that because the Labour Party are not in power and their proposals may be turned down by the Liberals and the Conservatives, we should strengthen their hands by offering our cooperation in response to the Viceregal announcement. This only betrays the existence of inferiority complex in ourselves. There is no reason why we should have this undue solicitude for any political party in England, for freedom will come not as a gift from Great Britain but through our own sacrifices, sufferings and struggle. If any political party in England is opposed to India's freedom, a time will soon come when they will realise that it is in England's interests to recognise India's right to be free.

'In conclusion, we would ask our countrymen not to be misled by pious statements of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, but to increase their efforts in the task of preparing the country for the situation they will have to face at the time of the Lahore Congress. The ultimatum delivered at the Calcutta Congress expires on 31st December 1929. If Dominion Status is not granted by them, the Congress as a body will have to follow up the ultimatum to its logical conclusion. It is, therefore, imperative that our attention should not be distracted in the slightest degree from the task we now have in hand, *viz.*, preparing the country for the coming crisis.'

Nehru felt sad about this kind of decision. He characterised it as an 'empty statement', that evaded the issue of complete independence for India. His signing the manifesto represented a cause of the Congress ideology which he thought should not be weakened by deciding hurriedly

against Gandhi and others. But doubts of varied nature still haunted him and he needed a clarification from no less a leader than Gandhi.

At this stage, it became difficult for Nehru to remain quiet and witness the political situation as a silent spectator. On 4 November 1959, he wrote to Gandhi explaining the working of his mind thus: 'My Dear Bapuji, I have thought well for two days, I can take, I think, a calmer view of the situation than I could two days ago, but the fever in my brain has not left me.

'Your appeal to me on the ground of discipline could not be ignored by me. I am myself a believer in discipline. And yet I suppose there can be too much of discipline. Something seems to have snapped inside me evening before last and I am unable to price it together. As General-Secretary of the Congress, I owe allegiance to it and must subject myself to its discipline. I have other capacities and other allegiances. I am president of the Indian Trade Union Congress, Secretary of the Independence for India League and am intimately connected with the youth movement. What shall I do with the allegiance? I owe to these and other movement I am connected with? I realize now more than I have ever done before that it is not possible to ride a number of horses at the same time. Indeed it is hard enough to ride one. In the conflict of responsibilities and allegiances what is one to do except to rely one's own instincts and reason?

'I have, therefore, considered the position apart all outside connections and allegiances, and the conviction has grown stronger that I acted wrongly day before yesterday. I shall not enter the merits of the statement or the policy underlying it. I am afraid we differ fundamentally on that issue and I am not likely to convert you. I shall only say that I believe the statement to have been injurious and a wholly inadequate reply to the Labour Government's declaration. I believe that in our attempts to soothe and retain a few estimable gentlemen, we have ruffled and practically turned out of our camp many others who were far more worth having. I believe that we have fallen into a dangerous trap out of which it will be no easy matter to escape. And I think that we have shown to the world that although we talk tall, we are only bargaining for some tit bits.

'I do not know what the British Government will do now Probably it will not agree to your conditions. I hope they will not. But I have little doubt that most of the signatories excluding you of course—will be quite prepared to agree to any modification of the conditions which

the British Government might suggest. In any event it is quite clear to me that my position in the Congress will become daily more and more difficult. I accepted the presidentship of the Congress with great misgivings but in the hope we shall fight on a clear issue next year. That issue is already clouded and the only reason for my acceptance has gone. What am I to do with these 'Leaders' Conference?' I feel an interloper and am ill at ease. I cannot have ny say because I am afraid of upsetting the conference. I repress myself and sometimes the repression is too much for me and I break out and even say things which I do not wholly mean.

'I feel I must resign from the Secretaryship of the AICC...The question of the presidentship is a far more difficult one. At this late hour I do not know what I can do. But I am convinced that I was a wrong choice. You are the only possible president for the occasion and the year. I cannot be president if the policy of the Congress is what might be described as that of Malaviyaji. Even now if you agree there is a possible course which does not necessitate a meeting of the AICC, a circular might be sent round to AICC members saying that you are agreeable to accepting the presidentship. I would beg of them to excuse me. This would be a formal matter as of course all the members, or nearly all, would welcome your decision with joy.

'An alternative course is that I should declare that in view of the circumstances, and also in view of the difficulty of choosing another president now, I shall not retire now but immediately after the Congress is over. I shall acts as the chairman and Congress can decide what it likes regardless of me?

'One of these two courses seems to me to be necessary if I am to retain my physical and mental health....I feel a little lighter after writing this letter....it is better that you should knowhow my mind has been working.'[2]

On 4 November 1929, Gandhi wrote a letter to Nehru from Aligarh, 'I have just got your letter. How shall I console you? Hearing others describe your state, I said to myself, "Have I been guilty of putting undue pressure on you? I have always believed you to be above undue pressure. I have always honoured your resistance. It has always been honourable. Acting under that belief I pressed my suit. Let this incident be a lesson. Resist me always when my suggestion does not appeal to your head or heart. I shall not love you the less for that resistance.

'But why are you dejected? I hope there is no fear of public opinion in you. If you have done nothing, why dejection? The ideal of independence is not in conflict with greater freedom. As an executive officer now and President for the coming year, you could not keep yourself away from a collective act of the majority of colleagues. In my opinion your signature[3] was logical, wise and otherwise correct. I hope, therefore, that you will get over your dejection and resume your unfailing cheerfulness...'[4]

A second conference of the signatories to the Delhi Manifesto met at Allahabad on 18 November, when the political situation as it had developed both in England and India since the Viceroy's announcement and the parliamentary debates thereon was reviewed. Jawaharlal Nehru's signature was given after anxious and conscientious discussion with Gandhi and Motilal Nehru, and a full explanation to the meeting of the leaders. While formally adhering to Independence, Nehru said that he would not place any obstacle in the way of all parties other than Independents, a small group, getting full Dominion Status constitution immediately, and he would likely explain his position in a short statement without detracting from the support he had given as resident-elect and general-secretary of the Congress, the policy of which at the time was for accepting Dominion Status when offered.

Nine members of the Congress Working Committee, Gandhi, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Jawaharlal Nehru, M.A. Ansari, Jamnalal Bajaj, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Subhas Chandra Bose, J.M. Sen Gupta and Abul Kalam Azad and thirty other prominent leaders were present. The following resolution was unanimously passed by the Conference. 'This Conference has viewed with misgiving and dissatisfaction the recent debates in Parliament in regard to the Viceroy's declaration. This Conference, however, decides to stand by the Delhi manifesto, and hopes that a full and early response will be made to it.'

The Congress Working Committee discussed the formula for adoption by the Leaders' Conference. Gandhi's draft, however, found a favourable response in the meeting. It pointed out that there was clearly an occasion to revise the Delhi manifesto, in view of the fact that Congressmen were a party to the manifesto it was considered advisable to stay hands till the Lahore Congress. The Working Committee's resolution which was passed unanimously after midnight read: 'Having regard to the Viceregal pronouncement of the 1st November, Delhi manifesto bearing the signatures of Congress members and members

belonging to other political parties in the country and the events that have subsequently happened; and having to the opinions of friends, that a response from British Government to the Delhi manifesto should be further awaited before the policy laid down therein is revised, the Working Committee confirms the action taken by Congressmen at Delhi, is being clearly understood that this confirmation is constitutionally limited to the date of the holding of the forthcoming session of the Indian National Congress.'

'Subsequently, Vithalbhai Patel and Taj Bahadur Sapru had a meeting with the Viceroy to clarify certain issues on the announcement. On 23rd December, Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, Sapru and Jinnah also met the Viceroy. Discussion was limited to the function of the proposed conference in London. It was pointed out that any member of the conference would be free to advocate any proposals, and that any measure of unanimity at the conference would necessarily carry weight with British opinion. On behalf of the Congress Party, the view was expressed that, unless previous assurances were given by His Majesty's Government that the purpose of the conference was to draft a scheme for Dominion Status which His Majesty's Government would undertake to support, there would be great difficulty about Congress participation.

The Viceroy, however, made it plain that the conference was designed to elicit the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit it would be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament, and that it was impossible for him or for His Majesty's Government in any way to pre-judge the action of the conference or to restrict the liberty of Parliament.

The following official statement was issued soon after the meeting.[5] 'The Viceroy met Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mr. Patel, Sir T.B. Sapru, and Mr. Jinnah at the Viceroy's House, New Delhi, this afternoon. The discussion was limited to the function of the proposed Conference in London. It was pointed out that any member of the Conference would be free to advocate any proposals, and that any measure of unanimity at the Conference would necessarily carry weight with British opinion.

'On behalf of the Congress Party the view was expressed that unless previous assurances were given by His Majesty's Government would undertake to support, there would be great difficulty about the Congress participation.

'His Excellency made it plain that the Conference was designed to elicit the greatest possible measure of agreement for final proposals which it would be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament, and that it was impossible for him or for His Majesty's Government in any way to prejudge the action of the Conference or to thwart the liberty of Parliament.'[6]

REFERENCES

1. *India in 1929-30,* pp. 466-68.
2. See Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters,* pp. 74-75.
3. On the All Parties Leaders 'Joint Statement of 2 November 1929.
4. *A Bunch of Old Letters,*, p. 76.
5. *The Tribune,* 26 December 1929.
6. *Ibid.*

14

Nehru as President

As per convention, the election of the president of the Congress started from the middle of every year.[1] In the month of August, the provincial Congrees committees put in their nominations for the presidentship for the Lahore session of the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi's name was recommended by ten committees, Vallabhbhai Patel by five and Jawaharlal Nehru by three.

On hearing from Congress circles about the proposal of his name as president, Jawaharlal Nehru was not happy over the decision of the Congress for entrusting him the presidentship of the organization. When he heard about the talk going on, in various circles, about him, he lost no time in writing to Gandhi on 9 July 1929. 'Regarding the Congress presidentship I think it would be better if you did not write or say anything in public for another month or so. There is no hurry, I am very nervous about the matter and do not like the idea at all. The situation in the country is changing and developing, and another month might give us more data to go by.'[2]

After a few days, he again requested Gandhi that his own personal inclination always was not to be shackled down to any office. In fact, he wished to be free and have time to act according to his own inclinations, 'But for years past I have been tied down to various offices and have had to give a great deal of my time to routine and other work to the exclusion of other matters to which I would have liked to attend to. On my return from Europe, I had the fixed intention of spending a few months at least in some village areas, more or less cut off from outside activities. I wanted to try to organise them according to my own idea, but even more so I wanted to educate myself and try to get at the back of mind of the villager....Somehow or other I cannot extricate myself from the tangle of activities I have got into. So far as I am concerned the presidentship will thus be a burden to me...It is very good

fortune that I have won the goodwill of a number of people, but with this goodwill there is also a lack of confidence. I represent nobody but myself. I have not the politician's flair for forming groups and parties....Of course you can lead, as you have done in the past, without being Congress President. But it would help matters certainly if you are also the official head of the organisation. I feel that it would be a great gain if you would preside. That would strike the imagination of the country and other countries. If I have the misfortune to be President, you will see that the very people who put me there, or many of them, will be prepared to cast me to the wolves.'[3]

Vithalbhai Patel wrote to Motilal Nehru, 'I have come to the conclusion that in the interest of the cause we all have at heart, it is necessary that Mahatma Gandhi should preside over the deliberations of the Congress. I am, therefore, of opinion that Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai should retire and help to secure the unanimous election of Mahatma Gandhi'[4] Motilal replied, 'As regards the Congress presidentship, there are reasons both for and against Gandhiji taking it up. I have had long talks with him on the subject and I expect he will agree to take it up.'[5]

In an article entitled. 'Who Should Wear The Crown' in *Young India,* Gandhi clarified a few fundamental points which prompted him not to accept presidentship of the Indian National Congress. He realised that the occupation of the Congress chair was becoming more and more onerous year after year. This might have been due to the wide-spread political programme of the Congress and the due dimensions of its relationship with the *Raj*. After the first Non-cooperation Movement, the political complexities has touched its heights and the Congress had to revamp its whole ideology taking into consideration the British policy towards India's national upsurges amongst revolutionaries, appointment of Simon Commission, Hindu-Muslim problem and the Nehru Report. Gandhi started clearly, 'It is a serious question who should wear the crown for the next year. It is all thorns and no roses....I must own I have neither the courage nor the confidence in my ability to shoulder the burden. I feel that I have become almost unfit for attending to the details of office work which I must do, as is my nature, if I accepted the office, I know that I am not keeping pace with march of events. There is, therefore, a hiatus between the rising generation and me. I look a back number in their company. Not that I believe myself to be a back number. But when it comes to working in their midst, I know that I must take a back seat and allow the surging wave to pass over me.

'In my opinion the crown must be worn by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru....Older men have their inning. The battle of the future has to be fought by younger men and women....Older men should yield with grace what will be taken from them by force it they do not read the signs of the times. Responsibility will mellow and sober the youth, and prepare them for the burden they must discharge...Pandit Jawaharlal has every- thing to recommend him. He has for years discharged with singular ability and devotion the office of secretary of the Congress. By his bravery, determination, application, integrity and grit, he has come in touch with labour and the peasantry. His close acquaintance with European politics is a great asset in enabling him to assess ours.

'And those who know the relations that subsist between Jawaharlal and me know that his being in the chair is as good as my being in it. We may have intellectual differences but our hearts are one. And with all his youthful impetuosities his sense of stern discipline and loyalty make him as inestimable comrade in whom one can put the most implicit faith.

"Will not Jawaharlal's name be a red rag to the English bull?— Whispers another critic....If a decision is really right for us, it ought to be right for the whole world. If in choosing our President we have to take into consideration what English statesmen will think of our choice, we show little courage of our convictions....The Englishman prizes honesty, bravery, grit and outspokenness all of which Jawaharlal has in abundance. Even if, therefore, British statesmen are to be considered in making our choice. Pandit Jawaharlal suffers from no disqualification...All things considered, therefore, my advice to those concerned is to cease to think of me and to call Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the high office with the fullest confidence and hope'.[6] Gandhi sent a telegram to the Indian National Congress, Lahore for on 19 August 1929 recommending the name of Jawaharlal Nehru for presidentship of Congress. 'Your wire. Whilst Thanking You Unable Accept Honour. Consider Self Unit. Apart from Want of Energy It Is Well Understood Am Out Of Tune With Many Things Done Congressmen. My Occupancy Chair Can Only Embarrass Everybody Including Myself. Pray Elect Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru'.[7] In a telegram to Motilal Nehru on 20 August 1929, Gandhi explained briefly, '...Could not preside as am out of tune. Much going on under Congress name. Have again recommended Jawahar's name. See no use my presiding.'[8]

Jawaharlal Nehru sent a telegram to Gandhi on 21 August 1929, 'Beg of you not to press my name for presidentship.'[9]

Gandhi explained to Jawaharlal Nehru thus on 22 August 1929,....I felt bound to express my opinion to the committee at Lahore in reply to their wire. It is enough for your self-respect that you do not want the crown....I have simply pressed your name as of a principle....If you are not to be the helmsman, the only alternative I can think of at this juncture is re-election of Father, or failing that, of Dr. Ansari. Can you think of any other name?'[10]

On 28 September 1929, the All India Congress Committee met at the Ganga Prasad Verma Memorial Hall.[11] The principal item of the agenda was the election of the president at the Lahore Congress, Mahatma Gandhi who was elected, having refused to reconsider his decision, in spite of repeated requests.[12] The previous afternoon members of the AICC met informally at the residence of the Maharaja of Mahmudabad and held a prolonged discussion on the election of the president. Gandhi who took part in the informal discussion, patiently heard the views expressed from different quarters, but held strongly to his previous decision not to accept the Congress chair. Thus Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's election was, therefore, a foregone conclusion.[11]

Pandit Motilal Nehru next stated that the meeting was convened specially to elect a president for the forthcoming Congress in place of Mahatma Gandhi who had expressed his unwillingness to accept the office.[14] Before asking the members to purpose new names, he invited Mahatma Gandhi to give his reasons for the refusal.[15]

Mahatma Gandhi, addressing the meeting said that he had private discussion on the matter with several members of the AICC.[16] He, in fact, wanted to see if such private discussions could create such an impression on him as to make him alter his mind. The discussions, however, brought nothing fresh to light. He would, therefore, adhere to his original decision of refusing the kind offer.[17] He was well aware of the fact that he was disappointing numerous friends, well-wishers and supporters.[18] Indeed Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had specially come down to Simla to persuade him to accept the Congress chair. He himself had pondered over this question, but to no effect.[19] He felt that his hands were too weak to hold the reins of the Congress.[20] It might be that he was committing yet another Himalayan blunder. He hoped it was not so. But if it were, he was prepared to take the consequences and pay the penalty.[21] His own view was that the step he was taking was in the

best interest of the country.[22] He felt that he would serve the Congress much better if he were out of the presidential chair[23] He asserted that it should never be mistaken that there would be any lack in his devotion to the cause of the Congress Party[24] He would continue to put every ounce of his energy into it. He would never spare himself in carrying out the Calcutta Congress programme.[25] Only he did not deem himself fit for the presidentship. It was his nature never to undertake a task for which he considered himself unfit.[26]

After this explanation from Mahatma Gandhi, proposals for new names were invited. Balkrishna Sharma from Kanpur proposed the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.[27] At this, Pandit Gauri Shanker Misra of Allahabad intervened saying that the AICC should make a further attempt to persuade Mahatma Gandhi to accept the Congress chair.[28] Pandit Motilal, however, intervened and pointed out that this was done jointly and severally by the AICC member throughout the day, but to no purpose, and to him it appeared that any fresh attempt would have the same result.[29]

After some further parley and listening to the views of T.A.K. Sherwan,[30] Gauri Shaker Misra proposed the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, but Patel not consenting, the proposition fell through.[31]

Only Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's name was duly proposed and seconded. He was thus declared elected amidst loud cheers.[32]

It is interesting to note that in 1927, Jawaharlal's candidature for Congress presidentship was proposed in the higher circles of the party, and it led to a comprehensive communication between Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru. Ultimately, Dr. M.A. Ansari was made the Congress president for the Madras session.

On 22 April 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru in a communication from London, with Mahatma Gandhi reacted thus: 'I did not send you any cable last week as I could not hit upon a sentence short enough and intelligible enough to convey my meaning. With more thought I adhere to my opinion expressed last week that on the whole it will be better if I am not chosen President. This disinclination is perhaps not due to the reasons you mention. Whether I am President or not I do not suppose I shall keep apart from political activity when I return home. I have begun to feel strongly that a *laissez faire* attitude and trusting to Providence to right matters is a very feeble way of combating evil. I do

not of course imagine that any individual can do much, but if everyone decided to wait and see, nothing would ever be done. Here far away from India it is exceedingly difficult to appreciate fully the position at home and I cannot therefore say exactly what I ought to do on my return, although I have general ideas on the subject. Under the circumstances and for the reasons I mentioned briefly in my last letter I do not feel inclined to welcome the proposal about the Presidentship. You and others in India are likely to be better judges. Personally, I should have thought that Ansari would be the best choice.'[33]

Gandhi informed Motilal Nehru on 19 June 1927:[34] 'Things, as they are shaping in the Congress, confirm the opinion that it is not yet time for Jawaharlal Nehru to should the burden. He is too high-souled to stand the anarchy and hooliganism that seemed to be growing in the Congrèss, and it would be cruel to expect him to evolve order all of a sudden out of chaos. I am confident, however, that the anarchy will spend itself before long and the hooligans will themselves want a disciplinarian. Jawaharlal will come in then. For the present, we should press Dr. Ansari to take the reins. He won't control the hooligans. He will let them have their way; but he may specialize in the Hindu-Muslim question and do something in the matter. It will be quite enough work for him in the coming year to solve the almost insoluble problem.'

After a fortnight, Gandhi again wrote to Motilal Nehru: '...that Dr. Ansari was the only possible president...I did not at all believe that his occupancy of the presidential chair would in any way diminish the weight of any settlement arrived at by the Congress. In my opinion, if Dr. Ansari is chosen, a reasonable settlement has a better chance of being adopted by the Congress.'[35]

On 20 July 1927, Gandhi explained to Jawaharlal Nehru thus: 'Sarojini Devi suggested under pressure from Mahmudabad and Mr. Jinnah that I should press Father to accept the Presidential chair for the coming year. I totally dissented from her view and told her that Dr. Ansari was the only possible President, though even he will be able to do precious little. Things are going from bad to worse, and it is quite plain that we have not yet drunk the last dregs. But I regard all this rising of the poison to the surface as a necessary process in national up-building.'[36]

On 10 August 1927, Gandhi wrote to M.A. Ansari,[37] 'I am sure you have not made the mistake of supposing that I have sponsored your

election[38] because I considered you to be a brilliant political thinker or anything near that state. The country has acclaimed your election with one voice because you are a true and good Mussalman...Hindu-Muslim unity is a passion with you. Your election is a demonstration, in spite of the madness raging round us, that the country is thirsting for domestic peace, and that it is sick over dishonesty, fraud, immorality and violence committed in the sacred name of religion'.

'Gandhi at first said no other man than Jawaharlal Nehru could be though of best, on the second say he added that if you declined, the only other man who could be considered possible was Vallabhbhai Patel...As regards yourself, I told him plainly that there was a conflict between my head and heart. While there was not the shadow of a doubt in my mind that you were the one man who had any chance of success in the very difficult position of Congress President for 1928 that chance appeared to me to be a very feeble one and I would naturally not like you to court failure. It is certainly not fair to press it on you after your long absence from the country.'[39]

In 1929, Mahatma Gandhi chose Jawaharlal Nehru in preference to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and by doing so, he strongly indicated in his writings of the time that he had the best choice in doing so. Indeed, he saw in Nehru a hope for the future—a youngman who could lead the Congress and the country in the best possible way. Besides Gandhi looked worried over the swift drift towards radicalism and communism in the youth. 'He saw in Nehru's stewardship with his magnetic personality a way of securing the youth's allegiance to Congress ideology and programme. Nehru's election was indeed a tribute to the youth of India. Gandhi was also deeply troubled by Nehru's drift to the far left, as the latter, being very strongly attracted to Marxism, was then in his extremist phase Nehru was critical of the moderate and middle-of-the-road policies. It was hoped that the responsibilities of the high office and the need to harmonise the conflicting view points would in due course restrain and moderate his exuberance. In any event, if the Congress were to adopt the goal of complete independence, Jawaharlal Nehru was the right person to lead the organisation for he was an ardent champion of independence in the past.'[40]

Gandhi explained in the AICC meeting held at Lucknow on 28 September 1929, when Jawaharlal Nehru was elected president of the forthcoming Lahore session. 'I know my name was proposed and elected by a majority of votes, but I find myself quite unfit for such a heavy

responsibility, thought it is a great honour...I assure you that in every programme adopted by you at the Lahore Congress, I would be with you, I feel I can do more work by not becoming the President of this year's Congress and I assure the house that I am firm on my words of responsibility that I gave at Calcutta....I am not to run away from the coming battle on the 1st January 1930. I shall willingly extend every help in formulating the programme and scheme for Congress work. What I wish from you is to discard this futile mentality that if Gandhi is not on the chair or Motilal not in the front, the Congress would collapse. You should stand boldly on your conviction of heart and push the work ahead.'[41]

At another occasion, Gandhi lauded Nehru's qualities thus: 'He is undoubtedly an extremist thinking far ahead of his surroundings. But he is humble and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point. He is pure as crystal. He is truthful beyond suspicion. He is a knight *sans peur, sans reproche.* The nation is safe in his hands.'

The choice for the presidential chair was Jawaharlal Nehru who was almost the youngest president, the Congress ever had. Greatly impressed and influenced by the patriotic fevour of Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi by the writings and speeches of George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell and Kenyas and by the world-wide political repercussions of the French Revolution and the Irish struggle for freedom, [42] he was at that time the President of the Indian Trade Union Congress, Secretary of the Independence of India League and was intimately connected with the youth movement. He later on confessed, 'I was against British rule in India: very strongly so...'[43]

'It was not his (Gandhi's) style to accept an office in institutional politics; he preferred to operate as a super-president...A number of actors influenced Gandhi's decision. The foremost was his won belief in Jawaharlal's qualities of leadership.'[44]

After he was appointed General-Secretary of the Indian National Congress at its session in Calcutta in 1928, Nehru made himself busy in organising and strengthening the party at its all levels. This he did by inspecting the Congress provincial headquarters, he himself inspected half a dozen provinces and extended his advice for their smooth and better functioning.[45] Besides he showed much interest and enthusiasm in matters, of recruitment of new members and during 1929 their number rose to 4,77,440.[46] His contact with various sections of Indian

communities and regular tours amongst peasants, workers and labourers based in the rural areas peasants, workers and labourers based in the rural areas enabled him to associate them with the Indian National Congress.

'To Gandhi, Nehru was the rightful helmsman of the Indian National Congress, and he, in fact, wished to separate him from Subhas Chandra Bose, so that the young leaders who wanted to break away from Britain, could not dominate the decision at Lahore. Nehru indeed was critical of the moderate and middle-of-the road policies of the Congress leadership, Gandhi was deeply troubled by Nehru's drift to the far left, as the latter, being strongly attracted to Marxism, was then in his extremist phase. The rationale behind such a momentous decision was that the future lay in the hands of the younger generation and in Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi saw this hope for the future. Rebutting the arguments of those who feared that this transfer of power from the old to the young might prove disastrous to the Congress, Gandhi said, 'He (Nehru) is undoubtedly an extremist thinking far ahead of his surroundings. But he is humble and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point.'[47] He was also sure that the responsibility was certain to chasten and mellow the youth to face the challenges with fearlessness.[48]

Gandhi, therefore, saddled Nehru with responsibility and astutely drove a wedge between the two young leaders. Moreover, '...it was worth having in the chair a figure of glamour and integrity who would keep active within the Congress, wide following among the students and the intelligentsia.'[49] The Viceroy expressed his apprehension and informed the Secretary of State on 11 October 1929, 'His selection in any case will give impetus to the left which it may be difficult to control. It would appear at first sight that the youngers have proved too strong for the older school.'[50]

Subhas Chandra Bose commented on Gandhi's decision thus: 'For Mahatma, the choice was a prudent one, but for the Congress Left Wing it proved to be unfortunate, because that event marked the beginning of a political rapprochement between the Mahatma and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and a consequent alienation between the latter and the Congress Left Wing....it was essential that he (Gandhi) should win over Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru if he wanted to beat down the Left Wing opposition and regain his former undisputed supremacy over the Congress.'[51]

Sarojini Naidu wrote to Nehru, 'It is both your Coronation and crucifixion....I feel that you have been given a challenge as well as offered a tribute, and it is the challenge that will transmute and transfigure all your noblest qualities into dynamic force, courage and vision and wisdom.'[52]

In his correspondence with his friends, it is evident that Nehru expressed the mood of unwillingness and unhappiness for his elevation to the Congress chair' 'I have just been elected', he wrote to R. Bridgeman, 'to preside over the next session of the Indian National Congress. I tried my best to get out of this, but circumstances were too strong for me. I am not at all happy about it.'[53] To S.A. Brelvi he wrote, 'I am an object to sympathy rather than congratulations. I have been quite clear in my mind that my election as President would reduce my effectiveness in many directions.'[54] He informed Francis. J. Pratt, a member of the Foreign Policy Association, New York, 'The Presidentship of the National Congress to which I have been selected is not a very soft or pleasant job.'[55] And to Gandhi, he wrote, 'I realise now more than I have ever done before that it is not possible to ride a number of horses at the same time...I am convinced that I was a wrong choice. You were the only possible President for the occasion and the year.'[56]

Nehru opined in his *Autobiography,* 'I have seldom felt quite so annoyed and humiliated as I did at the election. It was not that I was not sensible of the honour, for it was a great honour, and I would have rejoiced if I had been elected in the ordinary way. But I did not come to it by the main entrance or even a side entrance: I appeared suddenly by a trap-door and bewildered the audience into acceptance...My pride was hurt, and almost I felt like handling back the honour. Fortunately, I restrained myself from making an exhibition of myself, and stole away with a heavy heart.

'Probably the person who was happiest about this decision was my father....My election was indeed a great honour and a great responsibility for me.'[57]

It was unique in that a son was immediately following his father in the presidential chair. He was one of the youngest presidents of the Congress: he was just forty years old. 'I think Gokhale was about the same age and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (though he is a little older than me) was probably under forty when he presided...As statesmanship has seldom been considered one of my virtues, and no one has accused me of

possessing an excess of learning, I have escaped so far the accusation of age though my hair has turned grey and my looks betray me.'[58]

Regarding the reception of the Congress President at Lahore, *The Tribune* in its head-lines reported, 'Two Lakhs Join President's Procession: Hurling Sea Of Humanity: Muslims and Hindus Unite: Unbounded Enthusiasm.'[59]

On 25 December, the special train carrying Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President-elect of the Indian National Congress, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Pandit K. Santanam. Srinivasa Iyengar and other leaders steamed in at the Lahore Railway Station. The crowd at the railway platform became 'mad', and it surged and swayed making it impossible for him to alight. Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew, chairman of the reception committee struggled hard to reach the footboard to great the President Sardar Mangal Singh, the General Officer Commanding, Lala Duni Chand and Dr. Mohammad Alam were virtually jammed in the crowd. 'When after tarrying in his compartment for a little less than half-an-hour in the hope that order would be restored, Pandit Jawaharlal ventured to come out, he was almost mobbed. It was a severe trial for him to walk from the station platform to the portico.'[60] Thundering cries of 'Long Live Revolution' and Jawaharlal Ki Jai were raised.'[61]

Outside the railway station, in the vast *maidan* countless human heads were visible, and this sea of human heads was fed by streams of visitors from the *muffasil.*[62] People were perched on the tops of the trees and the roofs of the railway buildings. On both sides of the roads there were crowds of anxious men and women to have *darsan* of the young national leader.[63] While the procession had not yet started from the railway station, the historic Anarkali was palpitating with life, and shoulders were rubbing against shoulders. The people gathered to do honour to the Congress President were in *lakhs*.[64] As a prominent political worker remarked: Rome could not have accord a more magnificent welcome to Caesar.'[65]

The booming of the crackers marked the departure of the procession from the railway station. It was led by Lala Dunichand of Lahore on horse back and beside him rode Sardar Sardul Singh, followed by Lala Thakur Das, the secretary of the City Congress Committee. The mounted volunteers presented an impressive appearance and the lady volunteers clad in *khaddar saris* and led by Miss Zutshi lent a peculiar charm to the procession.[66] Unlike all old Presidents of the Congress,

Jawaharlal Nehru was riding a horse—it was a beautiful white charger.[67] Behind him were the G.O.C., Sardar Mangal Singh and other officers of the volunteer corps.[68] The most striking feature was the Sikh Cavalry. Dressed in white spotless *khadi* and wearing stylish turbans, the Namdharis with their flowing beards presented a thrilling sight.[69] Besides a Sikh *Jatha* on foot with banners in their hands and a large body of Congress volunteers completed the rear.[70]

In the heart of the city, the admiring citizens distributed fruits and sweets. Wending its way through the narrow streets of old Lahore, the procession emerged from the Lahori Gate and proceeded towards Anarkali, ablaze from end to end with multi-coloured electric lights.[71] Flags and buntings were fluttering in the air: there was a colourful storm. About a dozen triumphant arches were erected in the bazaars and they were tastefully decorated.[72]

Placards were displayed plentifully bearing such eloquent inscriptions as these: 'Uncrowned King of India, We Pay Our Home to You', Welcome Bapu, Starving India Looks to You, 'Lalaji Dead or Living is an Example of True Service to His Country: Indians Want to be Free in India, Englishmen are Free in England, Battles of Freedom are won with Deeds, not with Words; Nothing is greater than Patriotism; One who loses his Liberty, loses half his Virtue; Sacrifice Yourself at the Altar of Liberty; Hindus, Mohammedans and Sikhs Unite now or be Slaves for Ever; Gandhi is the Symbol of Truth, Truth the Symbol of Immortality: Jawaharlal is the Symbol of Youth and Youth is the Symbol of Action's and 'We Welcome You to the Land Dyed Red by Dyer and O'Dwyer.'[73]

As the procession proceeded, flowers and garlands named from the balconies and from the roofs where not even an inch of available space was left unoccupied. Tumultuous scenes of hilarity marked the showering of flowers on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by Pandit Motilal Nehru and other members of the family from the balcony of the Bhalla's shop in Anarkali.[74] A 'proud father' honouring a worthy son, it was a sight that gladdened the hearts of the multitude.

Jawaharlal Nehru was waving his right hand in response to the lusty cheerings of the crowds, and with his left hand he was holding the reins tight. He was apparently overwhelmed with the affection of his countrymen, as abundant as the roses showered on him.[75]

The nationalist Muslims took a prominent part in the reception and vied with their Hindu brethren in doing honour to the Congress President.[76]

The procession was stopped for sometime in front of the *Zamindar* office, where a decorated arch had been erected.[77] Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and the Khilafat leaders including Maulana Abdul Qadir, Maulana Abdul Haq and Maulana Habitual Rahman and others greeted the Congress President.[78] Besides, an address of welcome on behalf of the *Zamindar* was presented to him. The address *inter alia* stated that he was greeted with the greatest honour that India had in her possession inasmuch as he had been unanimously elected the first citizen of the nation.[79] In the address, the hope was expressed that unless the national demand was accepted by the British government by the mid-night of December 31, he would unfurl the flag of national independence on the banks of the *Ravi* and would thus carry the Calcutta Congress resolution to its logical conclusions.[80]

A welcome address was also presented to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by the Arya Swarajya Sabha. In welcoming him, it expressed its heartfelt appreciation of the services of Jawaharlal Nehru and urged that the Congress session should consist of more deliberative functions than demonstrative ones.[81] It further urged that Congress work by its executives and for broadcasting the gospel of the Congress.[82] It also suggested that a 'Congress Gazettee' should be started for propaganda and some workable programme for bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity which would be highly beneficial to the country's interests.[83]

For at least two hours before the arrival of the procession in Anarkali, all vehicular traffic was suspended owing to the dense crowd in the streets. The procession, in its magnitude and enthusiasm, was unprecedented in the annals of the Punjab. Never before had such scenes of enthusiasm been witnessed. The police were conspicuous by their absence, but large reserves of police were kept in readiness at the various police stations. The unprecedented crowds made considerable demand on the patience and perseverance of the people and the crowd kept order and discipline, and bore the crush cheerfully. The procession had to traverse three miles, the most crowded routes of the city. It swelled as it proceeded through the roads and by lanes of the town.

On the termination of the procession, Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a few words to the volunteers appreciating their services, and thanked the citizens of Lahore for the reception, respect and honour shown to

him.[84] Thereafter, he proceeded to Lala Lajpat Rai's residence to pay respects to his wife and had tea there.[85] He, then, left for Lajpat Rai Nagar amid loud shouts from the several thousand persons.[86]

On 15 December 1929, the volunteers' camp was opened at Lajpat Rai Nagar on the banks of river *Ravi.* The flag hoisting ceremony was performed in the presence of about 40,000 persons,[87] The camp was visited, throughout the day, by old and young, men and women, children, school boys and college students. The wet ground owing to the rains and the proximity of the river *Ravi* made the reception committee to take special protective measure. Accordingly the ground was thickly covered with straws and on it were spread *chaddars* to enable thousands of those who attended to squat.[88] Over 15,000 tickets had been issued long before the session was to open. The result was that the *pandal* was fully packed and the volunteers found the task of controlling the crowds very difficult on occasions.[89]

The *Tribune* stated, Congress Session Opens: Enthusiastic Scenes: Pandal Fully Packed.[90]

The opening of the forty-fourth session of the Indian National Congress was marked with scenes of unprecedented enthusiasm. On 29 December; from early morning in spite of the intense cold streams of people began to pour into Lajpat Nagar and by the time the sun rose, the traffic on Grad Trunk Road had become very congregated. A host of men worked the whole night to arrange seats to give the final touches to the Pandal.[91]

Indeed the decorations were simple and consisted of tricoloured buntings and coloured lights. Swaraj flags were most prominently displayed and fixed on *kanats* all round. The *pandal* was modelled on lines of the Kanpur Congress, but the special feature was the very marked display of numerous mottos in English, Hindi and Urdu tuned more to the advanced views than to those which had hitherto mostly found expression in the Congress *pandals.* These mottos were displayed by the Reception Committee and, therefore, reflected the political colour of the committee.

The leaders' dias, had on it the motto' Unite, Unite, Unite, while one facing the delegates declared, 'Up With Revolution'. The one facing the visitors said, 'Freedom's Battle Once Begun, Bequeathed by Bleeding Sire to Son; Though Raffled Oft Is Always Won.' Another motto prominently displayed was 'Country First, Religion Next.' Among other mottos were: 'India for Indians,' 'Only Wear Khaddar And No Other;'

Promote Prohibition;' World Peace Depends On India's Freedom;' 'Repression Will Nail The Coffin Of the British Empire;' Patriots Never Die;' Long Live Lalaji;' 'Beware of Of A Candid Friend;' 'Remove Curse Of Untouchability and 'Attain Home Culture, Home Rule and Home Industry.[92]

Nehru wished to live in a moderate way in a camp at Lahore. He was not happy when he learnt of a huge procession in a chariot. He wrote a letter to K. Santanam dissuading him from making such an elaborate arrangement. '....I would like to stay in the camp. Father does not want to go to the camp. I think you had better arrange for me and my wife and perhaps Indira, though I am doubtful about her, to live in the camp. The others will have to put up somewhere else. Father would probably like to have more than two or three persons with him. There is my mother, my two sisters, Ranjit, just to mention a few.

'I entirely approve of your charging everyone. As the General-Secretary is going to develop into the President, you need only allow for him once and not twice. But I think you should give free quarters and food to the AICC staff.

'I am amazed to read about the chariot. I thought you had some sense but it is obvious that the Lakshmi Insurance Co. has gradually driven it out of your head.[91] Do you expect me to go about Lahore on a bullockcart? I wish your committee will have the courage to do away with the procession completely or at most just to drive through certain selected routes, the whole thing not lasting more than an hour. It is an absurd waste of time and energy to spend five or six hours over this. As for riding on horseback, I have no objection to it but what on earth are you going to do for five or six hours? I do not at all like this idea of a *Barat.* Be original and say that you will have no procession.'[94]

Punctually at 5 p. m. leaders began to arrive amid thunderous shouts of *Bandemataram.* the president entered in a procession headed by a band followed by Saifud Din Kitchlew, Motilal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Mohamed Ali, Sarojini Naidu, M.A. Ansari, Madan Mohan Malaviya, J.M. Sen gupta, Vallabhbhai Patel, Srinivasa Iyengar, Sardul Singh and Jamnalal Bajaj.[95]

The proceedings commenced with shouts of '*Bandemataram', Bharat Mata Ki Jai,' 'Gandhi Ki Jai' and Jawaharlal Ki Jai.'* Considerable cheers were won by a band of national scouts of Amritsar by singing a song extolling the sacrifice of Jatin Das and those of his way of thinking.[96]

The officials of the volunteer corps were introduced to Jawaharlal Nehru by Mangal Singh and Kumari Lajyawati.[97] The flag post was 125 feet high, and as the flag was hoisted, continuous cheers came from the crowd and the cries of *Bandemataram*.[98] The president while addressing the volunteers said, 'I have just unfurled the National Flag of Hindustan. What is the meaning of this flag? It is one of the symbols of India's freedom. It is a symbol of India's unity. But remember that when a country's flag is raised then until there is a single living souls in the country it is not brought down. Today you have met on this occasion, when the National Congress is holding its most momentous session and is going to take a great step in the fight for the country's freedom. Today, when you have raised this Flag, are you not fired by the determination that it shall not be lowered? I want you to take a vow that you will have sufficient strength to protect this flag, and that you are ready to sacrifice your lives for freedom. This flag is of the Indian Nation not of any section of it. If any man is working under it for any section, then you are lowering this flag. But any man who stands under this flag is an Indian, not Muslim or Sikh or Hindu or Christian or Parsi, and the freedom of India is his chief objective. I, therefore, wish you to take a vow that until there is a single person alive to protect the nation's honour, you will not let it be lowered until India is free.' Continued cries of *Bandemataram* and *Bharat Mata Ki Jai* followed.

In the middle of December 1929, there were false rumours about the programme of saboteurs during the Lahore Congress.[100] At this, there was every possibility of thinning down the attendance.[101]The prominent leaders of the Punjab expressed much concern over these rumours and tried their best to falsify this kind of propaganda being made.[102] 'The following appeal over the signatures of Maulana Abdul Qadir, Lala Dunichand of Lahore, Dr. Mohammad Alam, Lala Girdhari Lal, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Lala Dunichand of Ambala, Maulana Zaffar Ali Khan, Dr. Satyapal, Sheikh Serajuddin Paracha, Dr. Kahn Chand Dev, Maulana Habibul Rahman, Lala Pindi Das, Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, Sardar Kishan Singh, Choudhary Afzal Huq, Dr. Parshu Ram Sharma, Mehta Anand Kishore, Nandlal of Jaranwala, Mohammad Abdullah of Ludhiana, Daulat Ram Khanna of Jullundur, Hayat Mohammad, Santram Seth of Amritser, Haki Nurudin of Lyallpur, Chintram Thapar and Ghulam Mohiuddin.[103]

'We have learnt with deep pain and strong resentment that some of our kith and kin are, at the instigation of interested agencies and

persons, spreading baseless and false rumours to scare away the people of the province from attending the forthcoming session of the Indian National Congress to be held at Lahore. Some of them say that machine guns have been requisitioned and that the whole of Lajpat Rai Nagar will be blown up. Others say that the Congress *pandal* will be bombarded and everybody found in the vicinity will be put in chains. Another rumour is that reactionaries and anti-Congresswallas will smash the Congress *pandal* to pieces.

'We know full well that the heart of the Punjab is sound and that such rumours can produce no effect on the patriotism of the people of this province. We also know that the circulars of the Government and the threats of various agencies cannot effect the determination of the Punjab to join the Congress.

'We would have treated all the efforts of the detractors with the contempt they deserve, but we find that everyday these rumours and threats are gaining strength and wide currency, and we apprehend that they are having their baneful effect.

'We, therefore, issue this note of warning to all our fellow countrymen to be on their guard. Do not please believe any of these rumours, do not be frightened, do not be afraid, do not be worried over these things. Pay no heed to this malicious propaganda and think it as your duty to contradict such rumours and to neutralise the mischief created by the hostile activities of the enemies of this country.

'We earnestly appeal to our countrymen that they should deem it a sacred duty, an urgent obligation and a noble task to attend the Congress session. Even if you have some difference with the Congress, do not stay away. Join the Congress and get those differences adjusted, The Congress is our national assembly. It is striving to win our freedom. It is our common platform, it is our common body. To help the Congress is to help the Motherland and to harm it is to ruin our future. We expect every punjabi to do his duty. We are fully conscious of the heroic nationalism of our province and we are confident that notwithstanding the persistent efforts of the enemies of the Motherland to injure our cause, the whole of the Punjab will help the Congress with a devotion and zeal the like of which cannot be found anywhere.

'Our province is on its trial and we hope to acquit ourselves admirably. The fate of our country is being moulded. Our future is being shaped. Can the Punjab keep away at such a juncture? It is

unimaginative that this land of heroes should be found wanting at this hour.

'It is needless to mention that we are earnestly working for the success of the session with a devoted heart. We have deemed it our sacred duty to place ourselves unreservedly at the disposal of the Reception Committee, and we all are doing what we can to ensure the success of the Congress. The Congress first and everything else afterwards. We would have been disloyal to our country if we had permitted our differences to cloud our vision or to prevent us from doing our utmost. At this juncture we know of only one thing, and that is to make a united and combined effort to make the Congress session a brilliant success—a success which it would be difficult to equal, much less to excel.'[104]

'First Streaks Of Dawn Are Visible: Let Us End Our Differences', this was the welcome address given by Malik Barkat Ali, a prominent Muslim Leaguer of the Punjab.[105] 'On the eve of the Indian National Congress meeting in the ancient and historic city of Lahore amid environments recalling all the glory and romance of Moghal India, let me extend to this exalted and first institution of the country the warmest welcome of the citizens of this province in general and that of the "living hearts of Islam", in particular.

'The Congress is today meeting in an atmosphere charged with momentous possibilities of the future. The long night of political domination and servitude through which the country has been passing stems to have reached its end and the first streaks of dawn are almost visible, heralding the birth of a new India for Indians. The Labour Party in pursuance of its settled and fixed programme of freedom for all has set on the course of its Indian policy with firm and resolute steps and through its responsible spokesman, Mr. Wedgwood Benn, whose name will certainly figure high in the role of that distinguished land of British statesmen whose ensign was human freedom, is sending messages of hope and comradeship that leave nothing to be desired.

'In a situation of this kind developing with startling rapidity and with certain prospect of our now passing into sunlight from shadows that have hitherto enveloped us, the duty of Indian leaders in taking stock of the existing conditions and removing all those elements and factors that make for division and have produced those wide gulfs and divergencies of opinion to which Mr. Wedgwood Benn so feelingly and so sympathetically referred in his last speech on Mr. Fenner Brockway's

motion is not only paramount but compelling and absolute. If there is one question that to my mind calls for urgent and immediate solution, being the very source of disagreements and differences that have been our scourge in the past, I will say it is that of representation of different peoples and communities in the legislatures of the country.

'The Nehru Committee certainly made an honest and a very sincere attempt to solve it, but their solution has failed to give general satisfaction and there are large groups whom it is impossible to leave alone sulking outside in their tents. Let there be set in motion another resolute and supreme effort to understand the points of view of those who are still differing. I am at once with Sir Mohammad Shafi that this attempt must be continued to the few and select first rate men of Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and other communities. Will the Congress leaders rise to the height of the occasion and extend the hand of fellowship and brotherhood to those who have so far failed to see eye to eye with the Congress constitution as evolved last year through the Convention.

'I will not rip up the main points of disagreement in this statement. They are not secret and have with sufficient loudness and clearness been proclaimed from various platforms. But I do desire to emphasize two main considerations, without which in my humble judgement unanimity will be impossible. So far as the question of electorate is concerned let it be definitely and clearly realized by the Muslim leaders who belong to the All India Muslim Conference School that separate electorates must be scrapped and can have no place in a responsible constitution: however, much they may have functioned in transitional period of development. Nationalism can never be compatible with sectionalism or communalism, and if India is to develop a responsible policy, she must first learn to walk in paths of collective nationalism. This point must, therefore, be fully grasped by those who have hitherto stood for and are still swearing by separate electorates.

'On the Congress side, let there be a little shedding of idealism and distinct approach towards reality and the hard facts of the situation. Universal suffrage is yet a dream and an ideal. By all means widen and lower franchise as much as possible, but yet do recognise that even the maximum lowering possible in the existing conditions must fall far short of the ideal of universal suffrage. Nor is it possible to devise formulas which will meet the end that universal suffrage was designed to meet, namely, reproduction of population ratio in the voting register. Therefore, why insist on universal suffrage of franchise that will give

to various communities ratio of their population in the electoral list. Why not boldly proclaim that if mixed electorate are accepted by the dissenting group, the Congress will certainly accept the alternative of reservation of seats on population basis. The Madras Congress actually passed a resolution to this very effect, and this in my humble judgement is a sure and unfailing cement to bring together all discordant groups and evolve that unity and concord which will discomfit all our enemies and end most of our vital differences...'[106]

Mangal Singh, G.O.C. of Congress volunteers at the Lahore session reminisced thus: 'We recruited about 2,000 volunteers and gave them training. Dr. N.S. Hardiker came there. He sent his men. So we trained them. We had also a Girls' Volunteers Corps in which three Zutshi sisters and their mother, Mrs. Zutshi, took prominent part. Lajyawati and Zutshi were the Lady Commanders. At the Ravi camp, we had a tough time...I was busy in the management affairs to control the situation. The main discussion was bout the Independence resolution. At the end, at about 12 o'clock, the resolution was carried. There was a great excitement and joyous celebrations. After that, I requested Panditiji to come out and hoist the national flag of Independence. At mid-night, we hoisted the national flag. From there he went to the volunteers' camp, and we had a dance there, Pathan dance particularly; for the whole night singing and dancing went on. Nehru also danced with us.'[107]

The following is the number of delegates who attended the Lahore Congress.[108]

N.W.F.P.	40
London Branch of Congress	2
Punjab	400
Andhra	101
Maharashtra	86
South African representative	1
Karanataka	36
Ajmer	75
Delhi	61
Sind	76
Bombay	19

Gujarat	68
Representative from Japan Branch	1
U.P.	543
Bengal	77
Bihar	282
Utkal	14
Burma	43
Assam	8
Tamilnadu	148
C.P. Hindustani	55
C.P. Marathi	29
Kerala	8
Berar	25

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1. The Congress session was mostly held in the month of December.
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15

The New Ideology

Saifud Din Kitchlew, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his speech, gave an elaborate history of the economic and political exploitation of India by Britain and was appreciative of the splendid services rendered by the masses during the first Non-Cooperation Movement. He stated, 'The leaders and workers, men and women, young and old, without any distinction of castes and creeds gladly filled the jails in deliberately violating the laws of the foreign bureaucratic system of government.' He explained that Hindu-Muslim differences were only transitory. They were the result of a tremendous reaction, and if left alone would have died their natural death, but goaded by the taunts of bureaucrats they tried to solve them. The All Parties Conference had done them no good; on the contrary by giving a status to rank communalists they had done immeasurable harm to the political movement. The Nehru Committee appointed by the Congress did all in its power to bring about an amicable settlement of inter-communal question, but their report had not brought them any real solution of those questions.

Kitchlew felt that there was something fundamentally wrong about their conception of religion in connection with the political life of the country. 'Let us realise that religion is after all only a matter of opinion, of faith, of conviction which can be changed at any moment in one's life. Let us, therefore, get rid of this notion of having religion as the basis of our political rights and political demands and divisions. The cries of religion in danger or religious culture in danger, are the result of distrust and suspicion created by the policy of divide and rule.' He urged them to have a good fighting programme based on a truly national and economic basis. He was sure that the masses would immediately follow their lead.

Passing on to the question of political status, Dr. Kitchlew said that after the passage of the Madras resolution declaring in'.ependence as the goal we stand pledged as honourable men to declare independence not only an ideal for our country, but our immediate objective. 'Two days more and the stipulated period of twelve months would pass. Hitherto the charter has not arrived (from His Majesty). It may be still in transit or it may not have been sent at all. Therefore, let us make our preparations in haste and prove to the world that we are really honest and serious-minded patriots, dreadfully in earnest, and we mean business.'[1]

Kitchlew next referred to the policy of repression of the *Raj* towards numerous Indian patriots who were lodged in jail on account of their demands of elementary rights like freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association. Besides he had no faith in the sincerity of the Labour governments. The party, he stated, was not prepared to consider Dominion Status as their party question and thus risk their reputation and chances of holding office for the sake of India.[2] India's freedom could be attained only through India's own efforts.[3] He, however, suggested the following political programme which could regenerate enthusiasm and patriotic zeal amongst the masses.[4] The Congress should declare complete independence as its immediate objective. It should completely boycott the legislatures and create the organization of a national army of workers with a view to coordinate and combine different workers and peasants' organizations of a national army of workers with a view to coordinate and combine different workers and peasants' organizations. He recommended the organization of a permanent body of full-time national workers, paid as well as honorary, and lastly, the organization of mass civil disobedience as well as individual civil disobedience in selected areas under the direction of a compact and small central committee of action with full powers of control.[5] Concluding he said, 'Today we are once again on the eve of a period of dynamic action. I appeal to Kahatmaji, pray come and lead us. We are ready but let there be no repetition of Chauri Chaura and turning back once we get our feet onward. Let the slogan be onward until the goal is reached.'[6]

In his presidential address, Jawaharlal Nehru explained to the audience about the consistent efforts of the Congress, for the last four-and-a-half-decade, in connection with the inculcation of national consciousness and sense of patriotism amongst the people of India. He showed much concern and sorrow for those who showed their patriotic

zeal by laying down their lives in the freedom struggle. 'Many of the giants of old are not with us...But none of you can forget them or the great work they did in laying the foundations of a free India...Many of their names even are not known to us. They laboured and suffered in silence without any expectation of public applause, and by their heart's blood they nursed the tender plant of India's freedom. While many of us temporised and compromised, they stood up and proclaimed a people's right to freedom and declared to the world that India, even in her degradation, had the spark of life in her, because she refused to submit to tyranny and serfdom. Brick by brick has our national movement been built up, and often on the prostrate bodies of her martyred sons has Indian advanced.[7] The giants of old may not be with us, but the courage of old is with us still, and India can yet produce martyrs like Jatin Das and Wizaya.'[8]

Nehru reminded the delegates of the vital problems facing India, Asian countries as well as the countries in Europe. He realised that the whole world was in the melting pot and everywhere there was doubt and restlessness, and the foundations of the state and society were in the process of transformation. 'Old established ideas of liberty, justice, property and even the family are being attacked, and the outcome hangs in the balance. We appear to be in a dissolving period of history, when the world is in labour, out of her travail, will give birth to a new order.'[9]

'No one can say what the future will bring, but we may assert with some confidence that Asia, and even India, will play a determining part in future world policy. The brief day of European domination is already approaching its end. Europe has ceased to be the centre of activity and interest. The future lies with America and Asia...We have forgotten that for millennia the legions of Asia overran Europe and modern Europe itself largely consists of the descendants of these invaders from Asia. We have forgotten that it was India that finally broke the military power of Alexander...India today is part of the world movement. Not only China, Turkey, Persia and Egypt, but also Russia and the countries of the West are taking part in this movement, and India cannot isolate herself from it....Civilization today, such as it is, is not the creation or the monopoly of one people or nation. It is a composite fabric to which all countries have contributed and then have adapted to suit their particular needs. And if India has a message to give to the world, as I hope she has, she has also to receive and learn much from the messages of other peoples.'[10]

The social structure of Indian society and its strength and stability were highlighted by Nehru who raised the historical fact that it withstood the impact of numerous alien influences, changes and conflicts of thousands of years.[11] 'It withstood them because it always sought to absorb them and tolerate them. Its aim was not to exterminate but to establish an equilibrium between different cultures...With the coming of the Muslims the equilibrium was disturbed, but India sought to restore it, and largely succeeded. Unhappily for us, before we could adjust our differences, the political structure broke down, the British came and we fell.

'India also will have to find a solution to this problem, and until she does so, the political and social structure cannot have stability....Indeed the real differences have already largely gone, but fear of each other and distrust and suspicion remain and sow seeds of discord. The problem before us is not one of removing differences. They can well remain side by side and enrich our many-sided culture. The problem is how to remove fear and suspicion, and, being intangible, they are hard to get at...Logic and cold reason are poor weapons to fight fear and distrust. Only faith and generosity can overcome them...No majority can crush a determined minority, and no minority can be sufficiently protected by a little addition to its seats in legislatures.'[13]

Besides biogotry and dogmatism came in for critical remarks by the president. He was happy to say that they were weakening in Indian society. He hated communalism in any form and found it difficult to appreciate why political or economic rights should depend on the membership of a religious group or community.[14] 'We have only to find out some way whereby we may root out the fear and distrust that darken our horizon today. The politics of a subject race are largely based on fear and hatred; and we have been too long under subjection to get rid of them easily....So far as I am concerned I would gladly ask our Muslim and Sikh friends to take what they will without protest or argument from me. I know that the time is coming soon when these labels and appellations will have little meaning and when our struggles will be on an economic basis. Meanwhile it matters little what our mutual arrangements are, provided only that we do not build up barriers which will come in the way of future progress.'[15]

Nehru was not happy over the All Parties Report and he recommended to the audience to put it aside, so that they could march unfettered to the new goal. In infact the Calcutta Congress, 1928, fixed

a year of grace for the adoption of the All Parties scheme. 'That year is nearly over, and the natural issue of that decision for this Congress is to declare in favour of independence and devise sanctions to achieve it.'[16]

The Viceroy's declaration did not escape notice of the president. The Viceroy had stated on behalf of the government that the leaders of Indian opinion would be invited to confer with the government on the subject of India's future constitution. But even a Viceroy's goodwill and courteous phrases are poor substitutes for the hard facts that confront us. We have sufficient experience of the devious ways of British diplomacy to beware of it. 'The offer that the British Government made was vague and there was no commitment or promise of performance...Many of us who believed in independence and were convinced that the offer was only a device to lead us astray and create division in our ranks, suffered bitter anguish and were torn with doubt....With much searching of heart we signed that manifesto, and I know not today if we did right or wrong.'[17]

'If the Calcutta resolution holds, we have but one goals today, that of independence...Independence for us means complete freedom from British domination and British imperialism. Having attained our freedom I have no doubt that India will welcome all attempts at world cooperation and federation, and will even agree to give up part of her own independence to a larger group of which she is an equal member.

'The British empire today is not such a group, and cannot be so long as it dominates over millions of peoples and holds large areas of the world's surface despite the will of their inhabitants. It cannot be true commonwealth so long as imperialism is its basis and the exploitation of other races its chief means of sustenance. The British empire today is indeed gradually undergoing a process of political dissolution. It is in a state of unstable equilibrium...India could never be an equal member of the commonwealth unless imperialism and all its implies is discarded. So long as this is not done India's position in the empire must be one of subservience, and her exploitation will continue. The embrace of the British empire is a dangerous thing. It cannot be the life-giving embrace of affection freely given and returned. And if it is not that, if will be, what it has been in the past, the embrace of death.'[18]

The efforts for world peace and signing of pacts were enumerated in the presidential speech. Nehru complained that there was talk of world

peace and pacts had been signed by the nation of the world. All this led to growing greed for armaments. He was of confirmed conviction that peace could only come when the causes of war were removed. 'So long as there is the domination of one country over another, or the exploitation of one class by another, there will always be attempts to subvert the existing order, and no stable equilibrium can endure. Out of imperialism and capitalism peace can never come. No gain that may come to us is worth anything unless it helps in removing the grievous burdens on our masses. The weight of a great empire is heavy to carry, and long our people have endured it. Their backs are bent and down and their spirit has almost broken...Many of the problems we have to face are the problems of vested interests, mostly created or encouraged by the British Government. The interests of rulers of Indian states, of British officials and British capital and Indian capital and of the owners of big zamindaris are ever thrust before us, and they clamour for protection. The unhappy millions who really need protection are almost vioceless, and have few advocates. So long as the British empire continues in India, in whatever shape it may do so, it will strengthen these vested interests and create more. And each one of them will be a fresh obstacle in our way.'

'...I do not think that any form of Dominion Status applicable to India will give us real alien army of occupation and economic control...We stand, therefore, today for the fullest freedom of India. This Congress has not acknowledged and will not acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to dictate to us in any way. To it we make no appeal. But we do appeal to the parliament and conscience of the world, and to them we shall declare, I hope, that India submits no longer to any foreign domination. Today or tomorrow we may not be strong enough to assert our will. We are very conscious of our seekness, and there is no boasting in us or pride or strength. But let no one, least of all-England, mistake or underrate the meaning or strength of our resolve....a great nation cannot be thwarted for long when once its mind is clear and resolved. If today we fail and tomorrow brings no success, the day after will follow and bring achievement.[19]

'We are weary of strife and hunger for peace and opportunity to work constructively for our country...But we long for peace, and the hand of fellowship will always be stretched out to all who may care to grasp it. But behind the hand will be a body which will not bend to injustice and a mind that will not surrender on any vital point.'[20]

Nehru frankly confessed that he was a socialist and a republican, and was no believer in kings and princes or in the order which produced the modern kings of industry.[21] '...We must realise that the philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over, and almost the only points in dispute are the pace and the methods of advance to its full realization. India will have to go that way too, if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality, though she may evolve her own methods and may adapt the ideal to the genius of her race.'

The Indian states were also discussed in the presidential speech. They were labelled as the most curious relics of a bygone age. It was strange that many rulers still believed in the divine right or kings and all it contained to be their personal property which they could squander at will. 'It is perhaps unjust to blame them for they are but the products of a vicious system, and it is the system that will ultimately have to go....The Indian states cannot live apart from rest of India, and their rulers must, unless, they accept their inevitable limitations, go the way of others who thought like them. And the only people who have a right to determine the future of the states must be the people of those states, including the rulers.'[22]

The president felt much concern about the peasentry and labour and espoused their cause with the realization of their great strength for the cause of the national movement. The Congress, he opined, must hold the balance fairly between capital and labour, and *zamindar* and tenant. 'The only way to right is to do away with the domination of any one class over another. The All India Congress Committee accepted this ideal of social and economic hange in a resolution it passed some months ago in Bombay. I hope the Congress will set its seal on it, and will further draw up a programme of such changes as can be immediately put in operation.

'We have to decide for whose benefit industry must be run and the land produce food. Today the abundance that the land produces is not for the peasant or the labourer who work on it and industry's chief function is supposed to be to produce millionaries. However, golden the harvest and heavy the dividends, the mud huts and hovels and nakedness of our people testify to the glory of the British empire and present social system.'[23]

'Our economic programme must, therefore, be based on a human outlook and must not sacrifice man to money. If an industry cannot be

run without starving its workers, then the industry must close down. If the workers on the land have not enough to eat, then the intermediaries who deprive them of their full share must go. The least that every worker in field or factory is entitled to is a minimum is entitled to is a minimum wages which will enable him to live in moderate comfort and humane hours of labour which do not break his strength and spirit.'

The methods of our constitution were referred as legitimate and peaceful. 'Legitimate I hope they will always be, for we must not sully the great cause for which we stand by any deed that will bring dishonour to it and that we may ourselves regret later. Peaceful I should like them to be, for the methods of peace are more desirable and more enduring than those of violence. Violence too often brings reaction and demoralization in its train, and our country specially it may lead to disruption. The great majority of us, I take, it, judge the issue not on moral but on practical grounds, and if we reject the way of violence, it is because it promises no substantial results. But if this Congress or the nature at any future time comes to the conclusion that methods of violence will rid us of slavery, then I have not doubt that it will adopt them. Let us also remember that the great postal of non-violence has himself told us that it is better to fight than to refuse to fight out of cowardice.'

The old programme based on three types of boycotts, *i.e.,* boycott of councils, law courts and educational institutions was also discussed in the presidential speech. He also talked about the non-payment of taxes as well as refusal to join army by the young men of the country. 'But still I think that it will be unwise to declare a boycott of the courts and schools at this stage...I feel that the step the Congress took some years ago to permit Congressmen to enter the councils was an inevitable step, and I am not prepared to say that some good has not resulted from it. But we have exhausted that good, and there is not middle course left today between boycott and full cooperation. All of us know the demoralisation that these sham legislatures have brought it our ranks, and how many of our good men, their committees and commissions lure away. Our workers are limited in number, and we can have no mass movement unless they concentrate on it and turn their backs on the palatial council chambers of our legislatures. and if we declare for independence, how can we enter the councils and carry on our humdrum and profitless activities there? No programme or policy can be laid down forever, nor any this Congress bind the country of even itself to pursue one line of action indefinitely. But today I would respectfully urge the

Congress that the only policy in regard to the councils is a complete boycott of them., The All India Congress recommended this course in July last, and the time has come to give effect to it.'

The programme of political and economic boycott was also explained by the president. He made it clear that India would not accept responsibility for all the debts that England had piled on her. In fact, the Gaya Congress held in December 1922, repudiated liability to pay these debts, and India must repeat this repudiation and stand by it. 'In particular, the poverty-stricken people of India cannot agree to shoulder the burden of the wars fought by England to extend her domain or consolidate her position in India. Nor can they accept the many concessions lavishly bestowed, without even proper compensation, on foreign exploiters.'

About the constructive programme Nehru opined, 'This should certainly continue but the experience of the last few years shows us that by itself it does not carry us swiftly enough. It prepares the ground for future action, and ten years' silent work is bearing fruit today. In particular we shall, I hope, continue our boycott of foreign cloth and the boycott of British goods.

'For this struggle we want efficient machinery, our Congress constitution and organization have become too archaic and slow-moving, and are ill-suited to times of crisis. The time of great demonstrations is past. We want quiet and irresistible action now, and this can only be brought about by the strictest discipline in our ranks. Our resolutions must be passed in order to be acted upon. The Congress will gain in strength, however, small its actual membership may become, if it acts in a disciplined way. Small determined minorities have changed the fate of nations. Mobs and crowds can do little. We play for high stakes; and if we seek to achieve great things, it can only be through great dangers. Whether we succeed soon or late, none but ourselves can stop us from high endeavour and from writing a noble page in our country's long and splendid history.[24]

'We have conspiracy cases going on in various parts of the country. They are ever with us....We have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule, and you, comrades, and all our countrymen and country women are invited to join it. But the rewards that are in store for you are, suffering and prison and all our countrymen and country women are invited to join it. But the rewards that are in store for you are, suffering and prison, and it may be, death. But you

shall also have the satisfaction that you have done your little bit for India, the ancient but ever young, and have helped a little in the liberation of humanity from its present bondage.'[25]

Jawaharlal Nehru's presidential address to the forty-fourth session of the Indian National Congress was a remarkable performance in more sense than one. One of the youngest presidents, the Congress has yet had, there was nothing in his address of the rashness or extravagance that was associated with the youths of the country. From first to last his language was the language of a statesman and matured Congressman. Again, one of the shortest addresses ever delivered by Congress president, it was indeed a rare combination of comprehensiveness and effectiveness. The transition from one subject to another was so natural and easy, in spite of the fact that it dealt with numerous burning and complex national and international problems of the time.

In his address, Nehru showed seriousness in reminding the delegates about the changes in the social, economic and political structure in the countries of Asia, including India, and Europe. In this context, he laid emphasis on the significant aspects touching upon a common human being, such as the concept of liberty, justice and property. He was, however, not sure about the outcome of a great challenge posed by various emerging forces. An optimist as he was, he was quite sure that in the new developments in the world, India would play a significant role and would give a 'message' to other countries.

The realization that all communities of India were to be treated on equal footing and no majority could crush a minority, was a unique phenomenon in the presidential speech. He was much critical of communalism in any shape or form, as it weakened a nation. He disfavoured barriers which blocked progress in the society.

The Viceroy's declaration did not escape notice of the president. Nehru expressed his anxiety and unhappiness over the 'vague' commitment of the Viceroy and called it a device to create division in our ranks. He advised the delegates and through them the people of India to beware of this kind of British diplomacy which did not show any promise of solution of our political problems. The Viceroy's statement was not in any way nearer to our demand of Dominion Status or independence enunciated at the Lahore Congress.

Nehru emphatically declared independence as the goal of the Congress and this meant complete freedom from British domination and

British imperialism. He was also critical of the concept of British commonwealth, and pointed out that India could never be an equal member of the Commonwealth unless imperialism and all it implied was discarded.

The president complained that in the war-torn world, both in Asia and Europe, the efforts of nations for the establishment of peace and development of peace-zones were not sincere as the success achieved so far was negative in contents. He was critical of the growing greed of armaments and the greed of domination of one nation over the other. He opined that out of capitalism and imperialism peace could never be established. He blamed the British imperialism for creating such problems at global levels. Unless some strong measures were undertaken, it was difficult even to think of peace and order.

The ideology of socialism which Nehru had begun preaching along with Subhas Chandra Bose was a glaring phenomenon at the Lahore Congress when he confessed that he was a socialist and a republican. He was critical of the kings, princes and big *zamindaris,* and warned the rulers in the Indian states that they should not consider states as their personal property and they should give due consideration to the growing political demands of the people in their regions.

Nehru indeed was dissatisfied with the behaviour of the big *zamindars* and industrialists under whom the peasantry and the labour were living in perpetual poverty. He wished to hold the balance fairly between capital and labour and the *zamindar* and the tenant, thus affording economic security to the dependents. The industry and the land, he opined, must operate for the benefit of those who work in them. Thus he opined that every worker in field or factory was entitled to a minimum wage which should enable him to live in moderate comfort and human hours of labour. Besides, it was made clear that India would not accept any kind of responsibility for the payment of debts that the *Raj* had piled on her. In fact the decision made in this regard at the Gaya Congress in 1922 was repeated once again at the Lahore Congress.

In the end, Nehru sought cooperation of one and all for the achievement of the desired goal which was the independence for India. he concealed no sentiment in declaring that the whole of India was in open conspiracy to free our country form the British *Raj*. And in this regard, he uttered a note of optimism to the fact that success would be for those who dared and acted, and who played for his mind and promised the ushering in of a new ideology to be given a practical shape

in the years to come. His deep involvements in the Civil Disobedience Movement and Quit India Movement along with millions of *satyagrahis* picked up from various levels of our society ushered into independence for the country. A slogan, with commitment of the nation, raised at the Lahore Congress, brought forth the desired result after traversing a long drawn field of political struggle for about two decades.

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16

Complete Independence

As usual the prominent Labour leaders showed much sympathy and concern for the cause of the Indian National Congress for which it always stood.[1] 'Indians of all shades of opinion always resented the preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919 in which it is stated that "the time and manner of each advance towards responsible government can be determined by Parliament". Quite understandably, Indians felt that this was a slight on them and maintained that they were best fitted to judge of the peace by which they should advance to the full measure of complete self-government as an integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations with all the freedom and privileges of that status. The die-hards in this country stood by the letter of the preamble, whilst Indians as firmly insisted on a Round Table Conference between representatives of their varying religious, political parties and interests and the British Government at which the whole matter could be discussed and thrashed out.

'There is now a unique opportunity. We have a Labour Government installed at Westminster, with a courageous and imaginative Secretary of State who regards himself as the representative of Indian interests. An invitation has been offered to all political parties and interests in India to meet the government here, and in a frank and full discussion at a Round Table Conference not merely to place their views before the government but to advise them as to what are, in their opinion, the best steps to take to solve that most intricate of problems, the future Government of India.

'From this Conference no point of view will be excluded. I would beg my friends in India to accept this genuine offer, honestly and frankly made, and send delegation to London composed of their best men who are prepared to meet the Secretary of State in the same spirit as he has shown.

'What is the alternative? A barren agitation with spasmodic riots—and in the unfortunate possibility of a change of government here—a policy of repression and "black and tan" government that will make of India another Ireland. That will merely play into the hands of the diehards and put back for generations the day of freedom and equality for India for which some of us given much of the best of our lives.

'More and more bitterness and misunderstanding would inevitably follow. I ask my Indian friends not to be put off by the fulminations in the British Press (of the *Daily Mail* and *Morning Post* type) of the U'Dwyer's Gaurehills and Birkenheads. They represent a very small, though very vocal, proportion of the British public.

'The Labour Party is solidly in favour of Indian freedom and self-government, and ranged behind them are many of the best of the Tories and Liberals. Lord Reading and Mr. Lloyd George by no means represent the most progressive part of the Liberal Party. Similarly, Lord Birkenhead's views are diametrically opposed to those of Mr. Baldwin.

'This is the opportunity we have been working for years. Do not let us down. On the contrary, I beg to you to accept this invitation and so strengthen the hands of the Friends of India, and complete the "Wreck of the Birkenhead."[2]

A French Brookway M.P. write, I hope the Indian National Congress will realise than more as in realty a new space in the amount of the British Government, and than it will decide to take part in the Round Table Conference and insist there upon Dominion Status. The need on the British side is that the new spirit should be expressed in the administration of justice. Congress can rely upon a group of friends here pressing for an ending of the persecution of political opinion and for an amnesty.'[3]

William Lawther, M.P. opined, 'It is always difficult for those who are far off, to understand what is the opinion of those on the spot on any particular question, and although Indian questions have for generations been the subject of debates and discussions in the Mother of Parliaments, there yet remains much misunderstanding as to what are the desires of the Indian People?

'Therefore, the Indian National Congress has an unique opportunity of helping to bring before the great mass of the people in this country, their considered judgement and opinions by accepting the invitation to the proposed Round Table Conference. Might I put it in

this form: before coming to the House of Commons, I was a Miners' representative, and the Miners in this country never neglected an opportunity of putting forward their views before any assembly. No section of workers in the world have laboured more to redress the injustices they suffer from and today we are within the border liness of the beginning of the end of these injustices. And feel that the steps that are initiated by the Labour Government on Indian matters will likewise lead to the redressing of their grievances. No cause ever suffers from the taking of opportunities at all times and on all occasions to state their ideals and principles. My message to you, my comrades of the Indian National Congress, is to follow the pathway, by way of a Round Table Conference, there to place your views on those subjects for which you have laboured so long and earnestly.'[4]

'William Bennett, M.P. remarked thus: 'The present time seems to me to offer more hope and encouragement to the Indian people than any previous period.

'I can assure you of the heartiest sympathy and appreciation of the demand for Dominion Status from all the members of the Labour Parliamentary Party with whom I am acquainted. The Round Table Conference is an absolutely genuine immunan.

John Scruit M.P. replied, 'The time has come for every man and woman who sincerely desired the welfare of the people of India to do everything they can to promote a real understanding between the two nations.

'I have always stood for the realisation of Dominion Status for India at the earliest opportunity, and it has been a matter of personal regret that the counsel of extremists on both sides has produced such a cloud of misunderstanding.

'The Labour movement in this country desires to render justice to the people of India. It is whole-heartedly in favour of self-government.

'How this ideal can best be carried out can be settled by the proposed conference between the representatives of the peoples of India and Britain.

'I trust sincerely that as a result of complete cooperation between these representatives, the world may be able to hail India as a self-governing nation, before the British Labour Government leaves office.[6]

James Barr, M.P. stated, 'I am most anxious to see India attaining full Dominion Status. Adapting a wellknown poem of Robert Burns, I would say:

'Never but by Indian Hands

Shall Indian wrongs be righted.'[7]

Will Thorne, M.P. opined, 'During my forty years in the Socialist and Trade Union Movement, I have always been in favour of the right of self-determination for the Indian peoples: more especially after digesting the late Mr. Hyndman's book on India.

'I think the British Nation have everything to gain and noting to lose by making the Indian peoples responsible for their won Government.'[8]

Ernst Thurtle, M.P. wrote thus: "I hope the National Congress Meeting at Lahore will effectively demonstrate Indias' determination to achieve national freedom, and will at the same time show to the world that she knows how to maintain national unity for the purpose of reaching this objective.

'Indian leaders must necessarily be the best judges of the policy and tactics to be pursued in furtherance of the nation cause but as an outside, I would like to express the hope that it may be possible for the Congress to decide to be represented at the forthcoming Round Table Conference, in order that all whom it may concern may know without misunderstanding the programme for which the Congress stands.'[9]

Peter Freeman, M.P. stated, 'Cordial greetings and every good wish for a successful Congress. At the present moment, India and Great Britain have been drawn closer together in mutual respect, understanding and comradeship than perhaps ever before to consider their respective interests and common ideals...

'The workers of England regard the workers of India s comrades in a common struggle for freedom from Capitalism and Imperialism. I urge the Indian leaders to cooperate with the British Labour Government as I feel sure in that way lies the best hope of securing not only Dominion Status but equality of status. The time must come for both people when caste on the one side and colour prejudice on the other must give way to ideal of freedom and equality for all.'[10]

E.S. Palmer, M.P. opined, 'As a Labour member of the British House of Commons I am glad to be supporting a Government having proper appreciation of the Indian National Congress point of view. The

highest hopes and aspirations of the Indian people are nearer realisation today than ever. Self determination is the general principle under which a Labour Government must operate and there can be no doubt India's demand for Dominion Status will be conceded at an early date.'[11]

Ben Tillett,[12] M.P. remarked, 'I hope you will forgive my inability to write a long note, but a very sincere and anxious wish is given to you and your movement that freedom may come to the people of India, and that democracy may carry with it its own spiritual sense and responsibility and alliance with the workers of the world....

F.G. Watkins, M.P. remarked, 'During the recent years, the people of Great Britain have become more understanding with regard to the question of self-government to India, and this has become much more marked during the last twelve months. It is now true to say that in this country there is an enormous volume of public opinion in support of granting Dominion Status at the very earliest suitable opportunity. Everyone in the Labour Movement is praying that great and beneficial results may come from the forthcoming Conference. The rights of all people to govern themselves in harmony with their own genius and traditions is a fundamental principle of the Labour Party, and by the application of that principle alone can the problem of India be solved.

'A large contribution to the disentanglement of world complication can be made by the Indian people, and Labour would welcome their cooperation and fellowship in the task of creating a relationship between the Mother Country and India based on mutual toleration and respect. I am confident that Great Britain will respond to the best possible spirit to all the aspirations of India which conform to the highest teaching of Indian philosophy and tradition.'[12]

Dr. Norton Phillips, M.P. stated, 'Members of the Labour Party look forward to the entrance of India into the British Commonwealth of Nations as a self-governing Dominion. Therefore they have welcomed very warmly the proposal for a Round Table Conference after the presentation of the Simon Report and urge their Indian brothers to participate to the fullest extent. A representative conference will, we believe, help materially towards the establishment of Dominion Home Rule. May I, as an Australian add the eager hope that it will not be long before India and Australia, Commonwealths of the East and of the South, are standing side by side in a world wide federation with the British peoples of the West?'[14]

J. Horrabin, M.P. stated in equally favourable tone. 'I am very glad to send greetings to the Indian National Congress. I hope very much that representatives of Indian National opinion will accept the invitation to a Round Table Conference and that this will lead to a better understanding between English and Indian people and provide a basis for the realisation of India's just demands.'[15]

Besides, among the message read or mentioned by Dr. Ansari as having been received from outside India, were those of the Kabul Congress Committee, the American Branch of the Indian Congress, the Fiji Congress, the Socialist Party of Persia, the South African Indian Federation, the Indian National Association, Cape Province, the South African Indian Congress and the Indian Oppressed Peoples' Association, Nanking China. The message from Mahendra Pratap from Kabul, specially requests the Congress to sympathise with Afghanistan and accepts the principle of world federation and push on organisation and activity to achieve independence.

Among the message from several parts of India was one of C. Vijiaraghavachariar, formerly president of the Indian National Congress, hoping that wisdom and long-sighted statesmanship would characterise the discussions and decisions for on both depended how well a free India shall be started in the year 1930,'s Mahendra Pratap in his letter from Kabul said, 'We must quite openly sympathise with Soviet Russia, accept the principle of Pan Asian Unity and solemnly agree to work for the complete freedom of all nations and federations of the world.'[16]

The following two condolence resolutions were moved from the chair and passed by the Congress, the whole House standing in reverence.

'This Congress expresses its appreciation of the supreme self-sacrifice of Jatindra Nath Das and Phoongi U. Wizaya and offers its condolence to their families, and is further of opinion that the foreign Government in India is responsible for their self-immolations.'[17]

This Congress expresses its sorrow at the death of Pandit Gokarannath Misra, ex-General-Secretary of All India Congress Committee and Prof. S.M. Paranjpaye and Messrs Bhaktavatsalu Naidu, Rohinikanta Hatibarua, R.K. Lahiri and Byomkesh Chakravarti'.[18]

After the messages had been read, Mahatma Gandhi moved the first resolution which ran as follows:

'The Congress deplores the bomb outrage perpetrated on the Viceroy's train and reiterates its own conviction that such action is not only contrary to the creed of the Congress, but results in harm being done in the national cause. It congratulates the Viceroys and Lady Irwin and their party including the poor servants on their fortunate and narrow escape.'

Gandhi spoke as follows in English after his speech in Hindustani. 'I have been asked to give you the substance of what I said in English. In my opinion, it is or it will be a good beginning with our resolutions dealing with the duty of the Congress, if we begin by passing this unanimously. In coming here to propose it, I have realised my responsibility fully. My certain conviction is that the Congress will fail in its obvious duty if it does not record this resolution. You find the reasons stated in the resolution itself. So long as the Congress creed remains what it is, namely, we want to attain Swaraj not by any means, but by peaceful and legitimate means, it is our bounden duty to take note of anything that happens in India in breach of that creed. You might be told, as I dare say, you will be told, that when people who do not belong to the Congress organisation, and are not connected with it in any shape or form, do particular acts which may be contrary to our creed, we are in no way and in no sense responsible. Those who think like that have, I say in all humility, little sense of the tremendous responsibility that rests on their shoulders, and they have little sense also of the great status that belongs to the Congress. We claim to represent the thirty crores of Hindustan or we not. If we claim to represent them as I, a humble Congress worker do, and as I hope you also do, then it is our duty to consider ourselves responsible for anything that a single person in Hindustan may do, if he is born in Hindustan. It does not matter to me in the least whether that person is a responsible human being or whether he belongs to the C.I.D. I hope you consider C.I.D. Indians also to be our kith and kin. Everyone we expect to convert to our creed, and use his services in the attainment of our goal. Not only that but the resolution stated and I hope you believe it, that such acts do great harm in the national cause.

'I do not wish to take up your time by drawing your attention to the various landmarks in the history of the Congress which would enable me to prove to your own satisfaction that each bomb outrage has cost India. You may say, if you wish that the reforms that were obtained could not have been obtained without bomb outrages or without violence. Let

me tell you, that everyone of these reforms have cost far more than you would care to face. You have paid in millions in exchange for your toys.

'The Congress resolution also congratulates the Viceroy and Lady Irwin and their party including the poor servants. In my humble opinion, it is a natural corollary to what has been said in the previous part of the resolution. We lose nothing by showing common courtesy. Not only so, we would be guilty of not having understood the implications of our creed if we forget that those Englishmen, whether in authority or not in authority, who choose to remain in India are our charge, that we who profess this creed of non-violence should consider our selves trustees for the safety of their lives. We have a tremendous military burden which is crushing the starving millions who are living in the seven hundred thousand villages in India. The burden is not due to the necessity of our Frontier. That is due, let me assure you to the fact, that thirty crores of people are held bond slaves by a few thousand Englishmen coming all the way from England. If we would get rid of this military burden at any state, it would be the necessity of the case that we hold the life of those whom we may even consider our enemies as a sacred trust. That is the clearest possible implication, in my humble opinion, of the creed of non-violence in the political salvation of India. If you hold with me, it is not only a matter of courtesy on your part to tender our congratulations to the Viceroy and Lady Irwin and their party, including their servants, and tender congratulations if you will to ourselves also. I hope that you, after having listened to everything that might be said against this resolution, pass it unanimously and heartily.[20]

Dr. Ansari seconded the resolution.[21] His first remark that freedom was never won by such outrages, roused a protest from certain sections in the *pandal,* while little red flags were waved from one enclosure along with shouts of protest. This enclosure was occupied by students for two hundred of whom the Reception Committee had issued tickets. Dr. Ansari retorted, 'Even those who waving the red flag should remember that Communist people do not believe in individual violence, but believe in mass violence. So, even the Communist creed does not permit such an outrage. Let me emphasise that India' whole history and culture is against this cowardly outrages. I hope you will not say one thing and do another. The world will trust you. On the other hand, consider the resolution cooly, and adopt this righteous course.'[22]

Swami Govindananda opposing the resolution said that the creed of non-violence should not be forced on those who were not

Congressmen and believed in different means to achieve the freedom of the country. The Congress should not therefore condemn those who did not believe in the Congress creed. It was very difficult today to say which party was serving the country better. The time for pronouncing any judgment would be when India was free. He further deplored that while the resolution condemned the outrage it did not say a word against the government for having arrested several innocent youngmen at Lahore who had nothing to do with the outrage.'[23]

Dr. Alam opposing the resolution, appealed to the delegates not to vote out of regard for any personality. A new era was dawning and so they should see that their vote followed the dictates of conscience. It had been said that the non-violent method was the best. Indeed, if that was not to be so, he himself would not have followed it for ten years. The question, however, was not whether the method of violence or nonviolence was to be preferred. The latter was indeed preferable, but that had nothing to do with the present resolution. The resolution was unimportant, improper and harmful, and hence needed rejection. Where was the need of repealing the declaration of belief in non-violence? Was it due to their having lost faith in their belief in non-violence? By such resolutions, the hands of the administration were strengthened, so that several innocent persons were harassed. Again, did the administration at all express any grief at the death of Lalaji which had been medically declared to have been precipitated by the beating by the police officials. Indeed, the government had not even agreed to hold any enquiry into the affair in spite of his efforts in the council.[24]

H.D. Raja declared that the resolution was contrary to the anti-Imperialist outlook of the Congress. What mattered it to them whether the bomb hit the Viceroy or any other.[25]

Baba Gurdit Singh of *Komagata Maru* fame felt that by this resolution they were deceiving Englishmen and provoking youngmen to greater acts of violence. Even old men, he though did not dislike such outrages, but also did not like to see youngmen to go to the gallows. He asked, it a man had a right to do. *Hijarat* to another country, had he not the right to sacrifice himself in order not to live under conditions of slavery.

Abdur Rahman, supporting the resolution, said that he honoured everyone who worked for the cause of the country, yet, as the perpetrator of the outrage in question had gone against the Congress creed, it was

the duty of the Congress to maintain its dignity by passing this resolution. He, therefore, supported the resolution.[27] Concluding, the speaker said that if any one of those who made such cries and considered himself capable of leading the country in place of Gandhiji would come forward to lead them, then, the speaker would oppose the resolution.

Purushotamdas Tandon did not agree that the bomb thrower was a coward, for he played upon his life. The question was whether such brave acts were in the country's interest. He felt that the resolution was truthful, and also politically expedient.[28]

Mahatma Gandhi's reply to the debate did not agree about the interpretation put on young men's mind. He came into touch with them by thousands either personally or by correspondence, but even if young men were of a different view, he must fight for the creed he believed in. 'Indian National Congress cannot say one thing and act another, 'he observed. Voting then proceeded and the task of judging which side had won by a show of hands was impossible owing to the almost balanced strength of both sides. Tellers were then appointed to undertake the counting which showed that the resolution was carried in Gandhi's favour.[29]

The next resolution was on complete independence. Introducing this resolution as adopted by the Subjects Committee, Gandhi chracterised it as the root of the future Congress work. The resolution declared complete independence as the meaning of Swaraj for the purpose of the Congress creed and resolved on the complete boycott of the legislatures as a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for independence.

In a short Hindi speech, Gandhi explained the various parts of the resolution emphasising the independence and boycott clauses. He reserved arguments till the reply to the debate. The following is the text of the resolution.

'The Congress endorses the action of the Working Committee in connection with the manifesto signed by party leaders, including Congressmen, on the Viceregal pronouncement of the 31st October relating to Dominion Status and appreciates the efforts of the Viceroy towards the settlement of the national movement for Swaraj. The Congress, however, having considered all that has since happened, and the result of the meeting between Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru and other leaders and the Viceroy, is of opinion that nothing is

to be gained in the existing circumstances by the Congress being represented at the proposed Round Table Conference. This Congress, therefore, in pursuance of the resolution passed at its session at Calcutta last year declares that the word "swaraj" in Article I of the Congress Constitution shall mean Complete Independence, and further declares the entire scheme of the Nehru Committee Report to have lapsed and hopes that all Congressmen will henceforth devote their exclusive attention to the attainment of Complete Independence for India. As a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for Independence and in order to make the Congress policy as consistent as possible with the change of creed, this Congress resolves upon complete boycott of the Central and Provincial Legislatures and committees constituted by the Government and calls upon the Congressmen and others taking part in the national movement to abstain from participating, directly or indirectly, in future elections, and directs the present Congress members of the Legislatures and Committees to resign their seats. This Congress appeals to the nation zealously the constructive programme of the Congress and authorises the All India Congress Committee, wherever, it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary.'[30]

Motilal Nehru emphasised the importance of the resolution as one by which the present session of the Congress would be known. So far as his experience and observation told him he felt that if they changed even a word of the resolution as passed by the Subjects Committee, they would be failing in their duty to the Congress. If they wished to maintain the dignity of the Congress and stand by their undertaking, they would adopt the resolution in the given form. He divided the resolution into three parts, one dealing with the past happenings, the other with their duty at present, and the third with their programme in future.[31]

Reiterating the terms of the Calcutta resolution, Motilal Nehru described the circumstances under which, he said, the talk of the Congress participation in the Round Table Conference had broken down owing to the Congress representatives' terms for the same not being accepted by the Viceroy. The resolution merely asked them to endorse the Working Committee's action which has been entirely within the scope of the Calcutta resolution. The appreciation of the Viceroy's efforts was a mere act of human courtesy. Undoubtedly by granting Dominion Status to India, Britain stood to gain more than India, as the only other

alternative for Britain was to wash her hands clear in India. As the talk of Dominion Status and Round Table Conference had ended, the present resolution declared Independence as the goal as the only alternative left.

Dealing with the boycott of Councils, he confessed that their attention had been diverted from their real goal by joining the Councils. Indeed the government had entrapped most public workers in one committee or other. And they had failed to achieve the object which they hoped to. Moreover, if they were declaring Independence as the creed, then going into the Councils would be entirely inconsistent with that creed. Those who insisted on the triple boycott, he counselled to benefit by past experience and move forward step by step. Perhaps it might be said that 'because he had himself reiterated the practice of the law, he desired to exempt the boycott of law-courts.' But he had no mind to take any further briefs. The third part of the resolution empowered the All India Congress Committee to launch on further steps of the campaign which could all be taken in 1930 if the country whole-heartedly helped it forward. He exhorted the Congress to accept the resolution, without which there was no other course left for work for freedom.[32]

Madan Mohan Malaviya moved an amendment for postponing the change in the creed till after an 'All Parties' Conference in March or April next. He reiterated the arguments used in the Subjects Committee, and narrated the developments that led to the announcement of the Round Table Conference, and held that the government had shown a clear intention of fulfilling the national demand. He drew attention to the sympathy exhibited by the British Parliament on Brockway's motion. Then, again, both the Butler report and the Simon Commission had been put on the shelf. He advised them not to be hasty in taking a revolutionary step. He asked, could the Viceroy give any promise regarding Dominion Status at this stage? It was premature to say that they would not participate in the Round Table Conference.[33]

N.C. Kelkar in moving his amendment to delete the words, in the resolution, relating to the boycott of legislatures, said, 'It is unfortunate that the flood-gates of the miserable controversy as to entry into councils have been reopened. No one need introduce any heat of feeling in this matter. I am a cool and collected man, but I am a man all the same with the firmest convictions. I think definitely that it is politically unwise to boycott the councils. The resolution merely seeks to renew the exploded stunt, and I predict it is not going to get much

support in the country. The situation in 1920 was quite different. Standing on this platform, Gandhiji spoke words in depreciation of Council work, and said that so far as work for independence was concerned, not one inch of ground was covered. In reply to that, I will say, measure the other peoples' work by the same foot-rule and you will find they also have not covered one inch of ground. In this demand for boycott of the legislatures, there is nothing more than party vendetta, political unwisdom and mental perversity. Congressmen in the Councils have not given any cause for complaint. There may be quarrels here and there and lack of discipline, but such quarrels and lack of discipline are to be found in the other departments of the Congress as well. Congressmen in the Council have carried on obstruction and assisted in the constructive programme. That Congressmen outside the Councils devote their whole time and energy to the constructive programme is a fallacy. All along they had been showing a sneaking kind of partiality for Council work, and for receiving assistance from Council friends. They did interfere in elections and seized any public advantage that could be got front the councils. Was this not against the discipline of the Congress? This sort of boycott, I say, is useless. After all, in this world, there are workers and shirkers. Workers will always work and shirkers will always shirk whether they go into Councils or stand outside. But the legislatures are the supreme powerhouse of the government, and if you want to organise against the government, and lead an attack on it, you must capture the legislatures. Take the simple example of a dacoity. When the dacoits want to enter a house and commit a loot, some of them enter into it and the others keep outside on watch, both serving a common purpose. Similarly, Congress work in the Councils and outside is co-rrelated and linked for achieving freedom for the country. Follow the example of Ireland, and settle a programme which will suit the capacities of the people. I plead for an all-round understanding. Let me do what I can. You do what you can, and let us all work for the common cause of the Motherland.'[34]

Subhas Chandra Bose next moved the counter resolution which he had placed before the Subjects Committee for a parallel government. He said, 'Before I proceed to lay my case I take this opportunity of conveying my cordial and hearty thanks to Mahatma Gandhi for coming forward to move a resolution which declares Swaraj to mean complete Independence. But I move this amendment because I believe that the programme laid down in his resolution is not such as to carry us towards

the goal of complete Independence. My amendment is consistent with the goal and in keeping with the spirit of the times. I have no doubt it will find favour with the younger generation in this country, if not now, at least in the next Congress.

'Mine is a programme of all-round boycott and I do not think it will be of any use to take up one item in the programme of boycott and leave out others. It will not be consistent with our creed of Independence to go and practise in the law courts. It will not be consistent either to enter local bodies, some of which like the Calcutta Corporation, require the path of allegiance to be taken. There is another reason arduous and the responsibility on our shoulder is so great that we shall have to concentrate our whole time and energy on the programme of work. I should like to submit, at this stage, if you are not prepared to go in for complete boycott, it will be no use for you to boycott the councils only.

'After all, let us be consistent. Let us be for complete boycott or none at all. I am an extremist and my principle is—all or non. If I am to advocate a policy of the capture of public bodies. I would like to capture every public body. If we are to boycott at all, why not boycott completely and concentrate our attention and energy on some other programme? Therefore, I would earnestly plead for the acceptance of my amendment, because I know public opinion in India today requires it.

'Now a word or two on Mahatmaji's resolution. In the preamble, you are asked to endorse the action of the Working Committee in subscribing to the Delhi manifesto. It is for you to consider whether on the 31st December 1929, you are prepared to endorse it. I am not prepared to advise any one to do it. Again, are you prepared to accept reference to the Round Table Conference? I would not call it a Round Table. It is certainly not round. I would call it square. A Round Table Conference is a conference between two belligerent parties, between plenipotentiaries representing opposite sides. I ask you whether the people in India are invited to send any of their representatives with full powers to negotiate with the representatives of the British Government, or, are we assured that the conclusions arrived at this conference are to be ratified by both parties? Are we sure that the conclusions of the conference are not to go up for the reconsideration before the British Parliament? The Simon Commission and its paraphernelia are to be there and the conclusions of the conference are to go before the Parliament. It is not merely the people of India that should send

representatives to the conference, but the European Chambers of Commerce and the Ruling Chiefs. Is there a fight between the British Government on the one hand and the European Chambers and Ruling Chiefs on the other? Is there any fight proceeding between government and loyalists? I know of no such fight. When there are these bodies to send in their representatives to this conference, I say it is not a Round Table Conference. But unfortunately, people in this country insist on calling it so and Britishers are equally insistent in not calling it a Round Table Conference.

One argument more and I have done. The resolution refers to the constructive programme as a method whereby we have to achieve the political emancipation of India. I would like the House to consider whether the constructive programme, which the Congress has been pursuing for the last few years, is something which is sufficient to enable us to reach the goal of complete independence. No doubt, there is a reference to civil disobedience in the resolution. But I submit that civil disobedience will never come until we can organise the workers and peasants and depressed classes on their specific grievances. If my programme is adopted, it shall be sufficiently effective to march on the road to independence. I appeal to the supporters of the resolution to note the altered circumstances and feeling of the people, particularly the younger generation, and accept my motion'.

Dr. Alam objected to the appreciative reference to the Viceroy because on the day, they were handing down to posterity the Charter of Liberty the same resolution should not bear the trace of slavery. H.D. Raja moved an amendment that besides civil disobedience, the Congress should organise labour in order to bring about a general strike. Hardly had Mr. Raja begun his speech, when he was greeted by shouts of 'No go back.' Madhavan Nair moved for the elimination of the boycott of the legislatures Govindachar moved for the boycott of law courts besides the legislatures, as it was dishonest and inconsistent to boycott only the legislatures.[35]

Satyamurti moved an amendment to omit the words in dicative of non-cooperation with the proposed Round Table Conference and the boycott of legislatures. He said, 'I whole-heartedly subscribe to the ideal of independence. I believe no self-respecting nation can have any goal other than complete independence. But the history of the countries like Ireland, Egypt and South Africa, who fought for independence, showed that they accepted Dominion Status as a compromise. The fourth

sentence of the resolution is, however, most mischievous and I ask you to reject it. For it asks you to repeat history and the tragic mistake committed of a futile boycott of legislatures. I wish Desabandhu Das and Lalaji were here to fight this resolution for council boycott.

'The reasons given for the boycott are wholly unconvincing. It is stated that this is a preliminary steps towards organising a campaign of independence. I emphatically say, 'no' to it. You can fight elections and win them, God willing, on the issue of complete independence. It is nothing that you get sixty lakhs of voters to vote in favour of those who are for complete independence? I say that the fight for independence may be carried on both inside and outside the legislatures. I say again that the experience of countries like England, Egypt and South Africa must convince us that we lose considerably and gain nothing by the boycott of legislatures. We are told that the oath of allegiance cannot be taken by those who are pledged to independence. May I ask how these estimable gentlemen agreed not to the boycott of law courts administering the law which the legislatures make? How can you take part in local bodies which are statutory creatures of legislatures in most of which you have to take each of allegiance.

'Another reason given is that the Congress policy should be as consistent as possible with the change of creed, I agree, but beginning with the boycott of legislatures is the beginning at the wrong end. What about insurance companies and cooperative societies which are creatures of government statutes and ought to depend on government assistance? Gandhiji himself admitted that it is impossible to have complete non-cooperation today. Therefore, I say that Congressmen capturing the legislatures is perfectly consistent with the Congress declaration of independence.

'You are told that the legislatures absorb too much of time of the Congressmen. After all you want only about six to seven hundred men for about fifty days in the year in those bodies. Is the country so bankrupt in her resources as not to be able to give the necessary number of men to work inside the councils and outside. Can anybody deny that President Patel has done something to take the nation along the path of Swaraj? Mahatmaji himself has spoken in praise of the work of the Swarajists, in the columns of *Young India* in the central and provincial legislatures. Experiences of countries which have won freedom recently convince me, and must convince you also, that you have to capture the strategic positions of power and give battle to those arrayed against you from

every platform. I suggest that we ought to sympathise our national activity. We must act on the maximum that those who are not with us are against us, and those who are not against us, are with us. There is no immediate programme alternative to the boycott of legislatures. Those who have been asked to come out of the legislatures, what are they to do? It is impossible to accept the boycott with contingent civil disobedience, and with no other programme before you. I suggest it is most suicidal step.'

T. Prakasam speaking on his amendment to postpone the change of creed, boycott of legislatures and the starting of civil disobedience, said, 'It is a matter so great thankfulness for the country that two great leaders had at last given the right lead to the country by refusing to send in any representative from the Congress the re-called Round Table Conference. That is the conference which is now developed by Mr. Wedgwood Benn. It is not the Round Table Conference at which our constitution would be settled but it is one to which the different warning elements would be invited. They would be made to quarrel and then they would say, "You are quarrelling here and therefore not for self-government. The Englishmen are so cleaver and they put their case in such a way as to make the world believe that they have made a gesture to India, and it is for India to respond. With that object Mr. Benn laboured hard and made a fallacious speech that India is already enjoying Dominion Status. That is how the trap was laid. The Congress leaders discovered it and declared that it would be an ignominy and humiliation to send any representative across the waters to London on behalf of the Congress.

Having next pleaded for the postponement of the decision on the questions referred to by him till after the results of the Conference were known, Mr. Prakasam said that the boycott of the legislatures took his breath away. 'I cannot understand how Gandhiji has reconciled himself to put in the boycott of the legislatures when the boycott of courts is more important when you are having an independence resolution. Independence means complete severance of the British connection. A lawyer goes to the court and swears loyally. If we pass a resolution for the boycott of legislatures without the boycott of courts, we will make ourselves ridiculous. This means independence on the one hand and loyalty on the other. Have complete boycott by all means, whether there is response or not. Response will come in due course. I have faith in the leaders and the followers. If you do not have all boycotts, do not have any boycott at all. Lord Irwin was touring Southern India a couple

of weeks back, and all the time he was anxiously enquiring in his interviews with non-officials whether, if the Congress refused to attend the Round Table Conference, there would be any other strong party. I am an admirer of parties in the legislatures, but still in India where once it was not possible to have party government it was left to the Congress to send candidates into the legislatures and declare to the world that they would make a party on the lines on which Pandit Motilal Nehru was able to do it'[36]

M.S. Aney put forward an amendment proposing the postponement of the question of change of creed to a special session of the Congress, and permitting participation in the Round Table Conference, provided adequate representation on it was given to the Cognress, and the political prisoners were released, and enjoining Congress representatives to place before the conference an approved scheme of Dominion Status. He argued that nothing had happened to show that the Indian leaders' terms would not be accepted. The presence in Gandhi's resolution of the clause appreciating the Viceroy's efforts was itself a certificate of the change of heart. If that were granted, there was evidently cause to give more time for settlement of the matter.

Maulana Zafar Ali moved an amendment which proposed to remove the preamble, and to set up arbitration courts to administer justice in the place of law courts, and asked the Congress definitely to take upon itself the duty of organising labour and peasants. He asked what did this cry of Dominion Status mean? England was hardly of the size of the Punjab. Therefore, it was for England to become a Dominion of India and not for India to work for becoming England's Dominion.[37]

Abhyankar supported Dr. Alam and held that the reference to the Viceroy was a symptom of hypocrisy or cowardice. Could they appreciate the acts of a Viceroy whose Government was responsible for killing Lalaji or showering *lathis* on Pandit Jawaharlal at Lucknow? 'I wonder why Pandit Jawaharlal is sitting there dumb-founded today. Gandhiji had told you to pass this resolution as something which would be manly. My definition of a man is one who will give sweet words for a mind act, but kick for kick and blow for blow. I warn you against being deceived.'[38]

J.M. Sen Gupta while supporting the resolution said, 'This resolution goes as far as the Calcutta resolution expected us to go, and as far as the present political conditions warrant us to go. The main point is: Do you have in India today another commander who can lead

the country to victory than Gandhi? You have not. You know that today Gandhiji has come out of his seclusion to lead us again. He has given you his programme.

After referring to the Delhi manifesto, Sen Gupta said, 'It was necessary for the Congress leaders before the Congress met to see whether this Viceroy's offer was a hoax or not. Most of us know it was a hoax. Now that the Viceroy has given a clear answer, we have a clear duty under the Calcutta resolution to declare Swaraj which means complete independence. As for the appreciation of the Viceroy's service, the feelings expressed by Dr. Alam are probably in my breast, but I am not going to quarrel with my commander whom the nation has selected for that little piece of appreciation of the Viceroy. The Mahatma says that he found the Viceroy. The Mahatma says that he found the Viceroy sincere in this matter, and that does not apply either to other past acts or to the future. As for the boycott of councils, I stood for councils work in 1923, but today the circumstances have changed. We must change means as circumstances change. We, in the Bengal Council, have been entirely successful in our Congress creed of obstruction; but now boycott is necessary, when we are going to change our creed. As regard local bodies, I feel that so far as Bengal is concerned, it will be a good thing if there is a proper boycott of local bodies also.'[39]

Jamnadas Mehta supported the resolution of Mahatma Gandhi although it was good only in parts. He opined that the boycott of the legislatures was a blunder and asserted that not all the men on the dais of the Congress platform, could jointly do as much work as President Patel had done in the Assembly. Indeed, barring the Congress platform, there was no better place in the country to carry on national propaganda.[40]

Mahatma Gandhi replied to the debate which lasted for about seven hours. He first spoke in Hindi and later in English. He spoke with much warmth and feeling commending his resolution for the acceptance of the Congress session without change of even a comma. He said, 'This resolution has to be considered as a whole. Even if a part of the picture is destroyed the whole of it is destroyed. To this picture, which I have presented to you, was given by the Working Committee all the skill that it is capable of in the framing of it, and after a hot discussion it has come to you. It is for you either to reject it in toto or accept it in total, but not to interfere with it or disturb it. The four words "in the existing circumstances" have their definite place and if you want to show wisdom

you ought really to understand and realise that some day or other, we shall have to meet in conference with even our enemies. Before that we want to be able to establish independence here. But in the existing circumstances, it is enough protection for you and for the nation and enough hint to the whole world. It does presuppose that your representative will not, dare not and cannot go into the conference where Dominion Status is a matter for consideration. They can only go to a conference where independence is the matter for consideration. Similarly there is the appreciation of the efforts of the Viceroy in connection with the Swaraj settlement. Either you believe the testimony of your chosen representatives or you reject it. If you really believe that your representatives have told you the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, when they say that the Viceroy seemed to mean well, he was courteous throughout and he patiently went through the whole matter as if two friends had met, does it not behove you—it is not a matter of common courtesy merely but it is your bounden duty to appreciate it? If you do not believe then you must bound us out of the committee and out of the Congress *Pandal.* You would have to say, "We don't believe that you are saying under the influence of the Viceroy who, being an Englishman and representative of the government, is incapable of being courteous and of meaning well.' If that is your opinion you must certainly accept the amendment to delete the words. Whereas, if you accept our testimony that the Viceroy did mean well or seemed to us to mean well, then it is your duty to adopt the resolution. This is a matter of courtesy.

'It is not a sign of courage that a man should be afraid of saying what he feels. It is a sign of decided courage when a man shows even to an enemy that which he believes to be good. This is what we believe to be good and we have placed it before you. So far in connection with the amendment that has been so hotly debated. As a matter of fact, people who are pledged to the creed of non-violence and truth will always go out of the way to perform an act of delicate courtesy to think well of the enemy, to see hope where there seems to be utter darkness, because a man truth-loving and non-violent, is always filled with hope, and also courage for decisive action. Therefore, pledged to a creed of this character, it is your bounden duty to accept this response in the general resolution and reject the amendment.

'Then there is the question of boycott of legislatures with reference to which I can only give you the testimony of those who went into the legislatures with high hopes and on the top of it all is Pandit Motilal

Nehru. He speaks of the Assembly with bitter experience. He says it is no good for him now. He regrets having gone to it. He has discharged his duty, as even a critic admitted, in the noblest manner possible. He says, "My work, I have done there. I shall not be able to carry on the battle of Swaraj even a step further by being there." That testimony is conclusive for me. I do not go in search of any other testimony and may it be conclusive for you also. I have no such personal experience to decide, but I have that conviction now even greater than I had in 1919. Friends ask why not add boycott of law courts and schools. It is certainly a consistent and logical proposition, but mankind is not always governed by logic and by consistency either, Sometimes mankind or a nation vindicates its weakness as also its strength by being frankly inconsistent. Wisdom lies in understanding our limitation, and the Working and the Subjects Committee have come to the conclusion that we may no longer go to the legislatures and we have to get strength enough to be outside the legislatures.

'There is one stock argument, *viz.,* we will keep our places vacant. It is not the idea of the resolution that the places should remain vacant. Imagine an opium den to which fifty thousand went, amongst whom we also counted ourselves. Shall we hesitate to empty that den because somebody else will go and occupy it? I am quite certain that we will not. If we believe the legislatures are played out, it does not matter to us who are likely to occupy them. The relevant consideration is thus; 'Can we or can we not in terms of complete independence go to those legislatures and hasten progress towards independence?" If you feel that could be done by going to the legislatures, by all means go there. I won't speak now about oath-taking, though for man like me it is a conclusive argument.

'As for boycott of law courts and schools, I do not see the needed atmosphere. If there is no atmosphere, what is the use of putting a clause which is not going to be acted upon by the very people to whom it is addressed? Hence this reservation. There is next the question of civil disobedience. It is a thing for which I live and move. Civil Disobedience I swear by because I cannot possibly conceive India vindicating her freedom by criminal disobedience. Criminal disobedience means bomb violence, the sword and the rifle. I can only conceive of freedom and independence being achieved by and on behalf of the starving millions scattered over by legitimate and special means. Hence disobedience to be peaceful and effective has got to be always civil and always non-

violent. If you want that civil disobedience in the very near fu ure inside of a few months, you will have to transform yourselves. You will not then deceive yourselves, unconsciously may it be, deceive the national that bomb and non-violence can run parallel and side by side.

'If you believe in your creed of non-violence and civil disobedience that is wanted, then you must observe stricter discipline and patch up quarrels. There should be no passion and running in against ourselves and no ugly demonstrations that we have in the Subjects Committee meeting during the past few days. We must be clam, cool, collected and brave. We must speak to the point and never obstruct. So if you really want civil disobedience in the near future, then it becomes necessary for you to conduct the proceedings of the Congress, the Subjects Committee and also yourselves in every walk of life in a manner behaving peaceful men, truthful men, and above all, nationalists pining for freedom who in season and out of season, nay, every minute of the twenty-four hours of the day, are determined upon regaining their lost freedom in the quickest manner possible. If you get that passion for freedom, there is no room for irritation, for jealousy or quarrels, and there is room for unity, and brave, calm and collected action. Hence I ask you with all the strength I can possibly command to carry this resolution with acclamation, because it is the central resolution. Let it not be said in the world that divided counsels prevailed on the question of independence. Let it go forth to the world that we rose to a man to vindicate our freedom and pledged ourselves to attain that absolute freedom in the quickest manner possible. There, I ask you to reject the motion of Mr. Subhas Bose. I know he is a great worker in Bengal. He was the General Officer Commanding of our force at Calcutta. But his proposition, though it is not doubt a good one, suggests parallel government. Do you think you can establish a parallel government, when the Congress flag does not fly even in a thousand villages? It is not bravery or wisdom and you cannot establish freedom by merely passing resolutions. We are not declaring in dependence as our goal. Here we go a step further and say it is not a distant goal, but it is our immediate objective towards which we are moving. Mr. Subhas Bose, however, seeks to go a step further. I should like to follow him through and through and bring myself to believe that it is possible today to establish parallel government. That means complete declaration of independence. Have we got our organisation to which to go for adjusting our quarrels and have we national schools? No. What then are we going to do after declaring complete independence? Heaven alone knows. That is why

the Working Committee did not suggest it and recommended just the longest possible step that we can take under the existing circumstances. A step further will land us in a pitfall. That is my certain conviction. I urge you therefore with all the strength I can command to accept the resolution without a change of comma even and to reject the amendments.

'I thank you all for the patient hearing. I don't know how long I spoke. I feel I have taken long enough of your time, but wait yet a while, whilst I live on this earth.'[41]

All the amendments were then put to vote and those of Pandit Malaviya and others were rejected summarily. Subhas Bose's amendment received some support but the opposition was so overwhelming that a count was not demanded. That relating to the bomb outrage was defeated by 897 to 816 votes, while the amendment objective to the appreciative reference to the Viceroy in Mahatma Gandhi's resolution was rejected by 900 votes against 765. Besides, his main resolution on independence, was when put to vote, was declared carried with only a dozen voting against it. Thus the resolutions of Gandhi were passed without any alteration.

The Congress congratulated Mrs. Sarojini Naidu who went to south Africa at considerable inconvenience to herself and also the Indians in East Africa on the clear national stand they took upon the Indian problem in that sub-continent. The Congress was of opinion that no solution of the question could satisfy the nation that accepted communal electorates and was based on a discriminate franchise or that imposed disqualification on Indians holding property.[42]

The Congress condemned the refusal of passports for return to India to Shapurji Saklatvala and others who were living in England and other foreign countries.[43]

The next resolution was bout the fixation of dates for holding the Congress session. 'Inasmuch as the Congress is intended to be representative of the poor masses, inasmuch as the holding of the Congress at the end of December involves very considerable expense to the poor people in providing for extra clothing for themselves and is otherwise inconvenient to them, the date of holding Congress session is hereby altered to some date in February or March to be fixed by the Working Committee in consultation with the provincial committee of the province concerned.[44]

'The Congress authorises the Working Committee to make all necessary consequential changes in the constitution.'

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also put from the chair the following resolution. 'This Congress is of opinion that the financial burdens directly or indirectly imposed on India by the foreign administration are such as a free India cannot bear and cannot be expected to bear. This Congress while re-affirming the resolution passed at the Gaya Congress in 1922, records its opinion for the information of all-concerned that every obligation and concession to be inherited by independent India will be strictly subject to investigation by an independent tribunal and every obligation and every concession, no matter how incurred or given, will be repudiated it if is not found by such a tribunal to be just and justifiable.'[45]

Pandit Nehru also classified the point that the repudiation included debts which England had incurred for the purpose of enslaving India and carrying on England's imperialistic designs. The resolution was carried.[46]

The following resolution urging the rulers of Indian States to confer responsible government was moved by Manilal Kothari.[47] 'In the opinion of this Congress, the time has now arrived for the Ruling Princes of India to grant responsible government to their people and to enact laws or issue proclamations safeguarding the elementary and fundamental rights of the people such as freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom to hold public meetings and security of person and property.'

Manilal Kothari said that at a time when they declared independence as the goal for British India, they could not omit to take note of the miserable position of the subjects of Indian States. Indian Princes considered their *Raj* as personal property. They were states in which one could not take type-writer or a cyclostyle machine. The Princes had spent one crore on the Butler Committee's work to establish direct relations with the Crown. The Congress was, therefore, right in taking up the case of the Indian States' subjects and demanding responsible government for them. H. Krishna Rao opined that the Congress had, for the first time, undertaken to deal adequately with the case of the Indian States' subjects who were under unblushing, undiluted autocracy.[48]

Satyamurti wished the Congress had gone further. He said that no permanent or satisfactory solution of the political future could be

arrived at without the active cooperation of the Indian States' subjects. The resolution declared that hereafter the people of British and Indian. India were linked together, for better or for worse, to secure freedom.[49] The claim of Maharajas to be spokesmen of their people was historically unsound, constitutionally incorrect and politically dangerous. A self-governing India would be much more friendly to the States than the present Political Department. The disputes regarding customs and others affected the Indian States' subjects as much as the Princes, and there must, therefore, be the subjects' voice in having a fair and equitable settlement. The resolution was passed.[50]

The Congress also passed without discussion, a resolution moved from the chair about communal settlement and giving assurances to the Sikhs.[51] 'In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report, it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent Indian communal question can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general, had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and the other solution of communal equations proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and other minorities, that no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.[52]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru announced that he had received an application from 115 delegates wishing that the two resolutions of the Working Committee rejected by the Subjects Committee be taken up in the Congress. These proposed the grant of autonomy to the *Khaddar* and other sub-committee and the reduction of the number of delegates to the Congress to one thousand. Although Mahatma Gandhi was the original author of both the resolutions, he advised them not to press them at the stage and they decided accordingly not to press their application. The president expressed his gratefulness to them all.

The Congress elected Dr. Syed Mahmud and Sri Prakasa as secretaries and reappointed Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Shivaprasad Gupta as treasures. It was resolved that the next session of the Indian Natioal Congress would be held at Karachi.[53]

In an interview to the Fee Press Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya commented on the independence resolution thus:[54] 'The various

amendments to Mahatma Gandhi's resolution were purely intellectual, logical and even psychological additions or substractions. Instead of treating his resolution as an organic whole, having a head, a body and limbs, the delegation began to view it piecemeal, much as the proverbial blind man view the elephant as the trunk or as the body or as the legs. It is difficult to see why people had not the wisdom to see that if Mahatma Gandhi was good enough to inaugurate non-cooperation, if if he was good enough to declare for independence, it must be good enough to draw up a programme which was whole and form which no part could be taken away or to which no part could be added without making a cripple or a monster.'[55]

The chairman of the reception committees, Saifud Din Kitchlew, in his address, traced the history of the establishment of the British *Raj*. Explaining the property of India prior to the advent of the rule of the East Indian Company, he attributed the poverty of its people to the nature of the British rule. He said, 'We have come of the most critical stage of our national struggle, the struggle for India's freedom.'[56] According to him, no problem of India was religious or political; it was essentially economic, and it was not practicable to bring about the economic salvation of Indian without the sovereign control of its destinies.[57] He started with a degree of confidence, a good 'fighting programme' based on a national, political and economic basis. The masses he was sure, would immediately follow the lead. He called peasants, tillers of the soil, labourers and workers as the future masters of India's destiny.[58] Reviewing the national programme, the chairman ended his speech on an optimistic note that the Congress should declare complete independence.

The declaration of complete independence at the Lahore session was hailed by the champions of complete independence as their victory. Behind this victory, however, can be seen a real compromise between the two schools of Dominion Status and complete independence—a compromise which had been attempted at the Calcutta Congress in 1928, but failed.

The momentous resolution was enthusiastically received by the press as well as the people. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* treated it as a departure from the speeches of the long line of his distinguished predecessors. It was not only the politically minded who spoke through him but also the masses, peasants and industrial workers who found in

him their began voice. Free from verbiage, his speech was as bold as it was full of practical suggestions, as realistic as it was idealistic.[59]

Liberty commented, 'The change was long overdue and nearly the whole presidential address is an eloquent exposition of the political truth which older leaders are so apt to overlook that India's freedom is incompatible with the existence of the British Empire as we know it today.'[60]

Once again after nine years, the Indian National Congress took a stern decision to defy the British Empire. Its proceedings showed that the leaders who sponsored the independence resolution had given their careful and anxious consideration to the implications of the momentous decisions made at Lahore. The delegates dispersed with full consciousness that soon they would be in the midst of another campaign of non-cooperation. The Congress thus concluded its session in a tense atmosphere surcharged with a grim determination to win *swaraj* at all costs, and at the earliest possible moment.

The resolution on complete independence differed from its earlier resolution considerably. Although a resolution on complete independence was first passed in 1927 at the Madras Congress, the Lahore resolution want a step further in two respects. In the first place, while, the Madras resolution made complete independence the goal of the Congress, the Lahore resolution made it its immediate objective. Secondly, the words, complete independence, which were left undefined in Madras, had now been virtually, though in not so many words, defined as isolation from England.

Another respect in which the two resolutions differed was while the authors of the Madras resolutions had expressly disavowed the intention of changing the creed of the Congress, the Lahore Congress had changed the creed itself. Since the birth of nationalism in India, and more particularly since the advent of Gandhi, the Congress had undergone many far-reaching changes. Its creed from its very inception till 31st December 1929 had been more or less complete freedom plus membership of the commonwealth presided over by the King of England. The Lahore Congress had, for the first time, changed all that, and change in this case was no more normal or theoretical in nature but practical and substantial in character.

A significant aspect to his session Was Dr. Ketchlew's strong and unequivocal condemnation of communalism in politics. There had been

rarely a speech of this kind in which the introduction of religion in politics, the talk of Hindu or Muslim political rights and demand for communal representation were denounced in more scathing terms than in the speech of Dr. Kitchlew. He said, 'We may be Hindu or Mohammedan by religious convictions, but that has nothing to do with our being Indian. That would not change the factum of our birth or our nationality.' To him the idea of Muslim of Hindu political rights was a misnomer. He believed that, whatever, political rights an individual had in India, these were by virtue of his being an India. He disdainfully rejected the venomous cry of 'religion in danger' and the dream of 'Muslim or Hindu Raj.'

Another notable feature of the Lahore session was the domination of it by what may be called the spirit of youth. Youths had been struggling for ascendancy in the Congress for years. It is true that the main political resolution was moved by Gandhi and recorded by Motilal Nehru, but they only meant that old in years, these two leaders retained in a full measures, vigour, idealism and passion for liberty that are generally associated with youths. Nor could there be any doubt that the conversion of these leaders to their creed was counted by the youths of India as their greatest achievement.

No less significant was the fact that the only strong and powerful opposition, in the beginning, offered to the resolution, came from one of the two greatest leaders of the youth movement in India. In the beginning, Nehru and Bose disliked Communism while Nehru admired Russia. But this identity could not last long. Nehru's loyalty to Gandhi sealed the fate of their friendship. 'Gandhi is our biggest gun,' was the faith of Nehru. The thinking of Bose was just the opposite; '...as a political leader Gandhi has failed,'[61] was his confirmed belief. Leaders with these differing views were bound to part company sooner or later, and conflict of Bose with Gandhi on the ideological plane was sooner, or later inevitable. Whatever be its manifestation, none of the two by temperament, disposition and experience could convert each other to his view.

Gandhi was too mature and experienced a leader to be readily converted to the belief that the social and economic edifice in India which had a history behind it, extending over thousands of years, could be altered in the course of a few months or even years, and who realised that the best thing to do was to concentrate the attention on limited programme and to proceed step by step. He could not conceive of India

freed by any method except by Civil Disobedience. In the present atmosphere they were in a position to fight the government and gain freedom by not waving red flag.

Intellectual and political differences did not diminish Gandhi's affection for Nehru. He did not attempt to muzzle him. His reaction was characteristic and his objection was not so much to the radical views of the younger men, as to the light-hearted manner in which brave declarations were made without any serious effort to implement them. He knew that Nehru was not a 'blind follower' and had a mind of his own. Their philosophies of life diverged widely, but they were at one in their desire to free the country of foreign rule, its gross poverty and its social and economic inequalities. Gandhi indeed wanted to harness Nehru's great talents and energies and was confident of containing his impetuous and rebellious spirit. He was to become Gandhi's link with the younger generation. Nehru also realized the indispensability of Mahatm'as leadership and showed receptivity and flexibility in honouring his advice. By doing, so he hoped that eventually Gandhi's weight would be thrown in favour of radicalizing India's politics and economy.

When the Congress was thinking in terms of independence and Civil Disobedience Movement for its attainment, the Muslim League had no plan of its own. Brought up and nurtured under British rule, it did not like to toe the Congress line and Mohammed Ali Jinnah who had dissociated himself with the Congress, was too stern and unbending to be treated as second to any one in leadership. He strongly denounced the independence resolution and kept the League away from the movement which he thought would not subserve Muslim interest. In an interview, Jinnah strongly denounced the independence resolution. The members of his community, except the nationalist Muslims, did not participate in this Conference, rather watched the events with concern and anxiety from outside. Jinnah said, 'I have read accounts of the proceedings of the Congress with extreme pain and disappointment. I think Gandhiji and Pandit Motilal have taken on themselves the gravest responsibility in taking decision which they did in breaking up the pourparlers with the Viceroy, and, thereafter, in getting the Congress to adopt resolutions which, in my opinion, are most misleading, unpractical, unsound and unwise. They are calculated to do enormous harm to the interest of India.

'Mahatma Gandhi, it seems to me, is mentally and constitutionally incapable of learning or unlearning. The enormous amount of harm he did in 1922—and subsequently admitted it was—a Himalayan blunder has not taught him to realise the consequences that would follow his policy in which he, no doubt, still believes but which is utterly unsuited to modern times and realities, we have to face in India.

'The proposition has only to be stated to be rejected that independence can be won by non-violent non-cooperation. Why independence can be won by non-violent non-cooperation. Why even before the proceedings of the Congress terminated. Union Jack was destroyed not very far from the place where Mahatma Gandhi was sitting, and does Gandhiji believe that majority with which he carried this resolution will enable him to achieve independence without violence?[62]

'The whole of Gandhiji's political philosophy seems to me a bundle of contradictions impossible for any rational man to follow.

'It seems he is reported to have said in concluding his speech on the independence resolution 'what are we going to do, Haven only knows. But the Working Committee has taken the longest possible step that he can take and a step further might throw us in a pit.' All I can say in Heaven helps Gandhiji, but I feel quite differently towards the young men whose mentality is very different and why probably think Gandhiji is indispensable to them at the present moment.

'To the youth of India I will only say they are premature, they are precipitating the movement which I sincerely believe is likely to do the greatest possible damage to the vital interests of India.

'This is a moment when I urge on them to follow the advice of those who yield to none in honesty of purpose or patriotism.'[63]

The prominent Sikh leaders including Sardar Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and Sardar Mehtab Singh sought interview with Mahatma Gandhi and Motilal Nehru in order to discuss the problems of their community.[64] They suggested that the Nehru Report should be scrapped and there should be communal representation in any shape or form. They demanded that their community be given due consideration along with other communities of the country.[65]

The next proposal was that a piece of saffron colour cloth be affixed to the National Flag as long as there are different colours in the flag.[66] Gandhi assured them that these resolutions would be placed before

the Congress during 1931.[67] At this, the Sikh leaders assured Gandhi that if these proposals were adopted by the Congress, the Sikhs would gladly joint the Congress in a large number and would 'form a limb' of the whole organisation.'[68]

Commenting on the Lahore Congress, the Viceroy who showed much concern over it, wrote to the Secretary of State, 'If they do try it (civil disobedience), we shall not hesitate to hit as hard as we can....I do not think it is possible to dismiss the Lahore conclusions lightly as the mere academic statements of a remote objective...and that it involves very mischievous and dangerous potentialities.'[69]

This official criticism and determination to deal with the contemplated movement with a strong hand could not deter the determination of the leaders of the Indian National Congress to devote all their energies and resources in planning and executing the decision already taken.

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12. *Ibid.*, He was Secretary of General Workers Union.
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17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. See *The Tribune*, 29 December 1929, 1 January 1930.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Dr. Ansari spoke in Urdu.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. Cries of 'Sitdown, Go back' were raised from the audience.
28. *The Tribune*, 29 December 1929, 1 January 1930.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. *bid.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. Resolution V.
43. *Ibid.* VI.
44. *Ibid.* VII.
45. *Ibid.* VIII.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.* IX.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.* X.
52. *Ibid.* X.

53. Resolution XI.
54. *The Tribune* 4 January 1930.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Report of the Forty-Fourth Annual Session of the Indian National Congress held at Lahore, 1929, p. 20.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 1 January 1930.
60. Quoted in *The Tribune,* 1 January 1930.
61. Hugh Toye, *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Springing Tiger: Study of a Revolution* Bombay, 1962, p. 38.
62. *The Tribune,* 4 January 1930.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Halifax Papers:* Viceroy to Secretary of State, 9 January 1930.

17

New Ideology

As per convention, the election of the President of the Congress started from the middle of every year.[1] In the month of August, the provincial Congress committees put in their nominations for the presidentship for the Lahore session of the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi's name was recommended by ten committees, Vallabhbhai Patel by five and Jawaharlal Nehru by three.

On hearing from Congress circles about the proposal of his name as president, Jawaharlal Nehru was not happy over the decision of the Congress for entrusting him the presidentship of the organization. When he heard about the talk going on, in various circles, about him, he lost no time in writing to Gandhi on 9 July 1929, "Regarding the Congress presidentship I think it would be better if you did not write or say anything in public for another month or so. There is no hurry. I am very nervous about the matter and do not like the idea at all. The situation in the country is changing and developing and another month might give us more data to go by."[2]

After a few days, he again requested Gandhi that his own personal inclination always was not to be shackled down to any office. In fact, he wished to be free and have time to act according to his own inclinations. "But for years past I have been tied down to various offices and have had to give a great deal of my time to routine and other work to the exclusion of other matters to which I would have liked to attend to. On my return from Europe, I had the fixed intention of spending a few months at least in some village areas, more or less cut off from outside activities. I wanted to try to organise them according to my own ideas, but even more so I wanted to educate myself and try to get at the back of mind of the villages....Somehow or other I cannot extricate myself from the tangle of activities I have got into....So far as I am concerned the presidentship will thus be a burden to me....It is very good

fortune that I have won the goodwill of a number of people, but with this goodwill there is also a lack of confidence. I represent nobody but myself. I have not the politician's flair for forming groups and parties....Of course, you can lead, as you have done in the past, without being Congress President. But it would help matters certainly if you are also the official head of the organization. I feel that it would be a great gain if you would preside. That would strike the imagination of the country and other countries. If I have the misfortune to be President, you will see that the very people who put me there, or many of them, will be prepared to cast me to the wolves."[3]

Vithalbhai Patel wrote to Motilal, "I have come to the conclusion that in the interest of the cause we all have to at heart, it is necessary that Mahatma Gandhi should preside over the deliberations of the Congress, I am, therefore, of opinion that Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai should retire and help to secure the unanimous election of Mahatma Gandhi."[4] Motilal replied, "As regards the Congress presidentship, there are reasons both for and against Gandhiji taking it up. I have had long talks with him on the subject and I expect he will agree to take it up."[5]

In an article entitled 'Who Should Wear the Crown' in *Young India,* Gandhi clarified a few fundamental points which prompted him not to accept presidentship of the Indian National Congress. He realised that the occupation of the Congress chair was becoming more and more onerous year after year. This might have been due to the widespread political programme of the Congress and the due dimensions of its relationship with the *Raj.* After the first Non-cooperations Movement, the political complexities had touched its heights and the Congress had to revamp its whole ideology taking into consideration the British policy towards India's national upsurge amongst revolutionaries, appointment of Simon Commission, Hindu-Muslim problem and the Nehru Report. Gandhi stated clearly, "It is a serious question who should wear the crown for the next year. It is all thorns and no roses....I must own I have neither the courage nor the confidence in my ability to shoulder the burden. I feel that I have become almost unfit for attending to the details of office work which I must do, as is my nature, if I accepted the office." I know that I am not keeping pace with march of events. There is, therefore, a hiatus between the rising generation and me. I look a back number in their company. Not that I believe myself to be a back number. But when it comes to working in their midst. I know that I must take a back seat and allow the surging wave to pass over me.

"In my opinion the crown must be worn by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru...Older men have their innings. The battle of the future has to be fought by younger men and women...Older men should yield with grace what will be taken from them by force if they do not read the sign of the times. Responsibility will mellow and sober the youth, and prepare them for the burden they must discharge...Pandit Jawaharlal has everything to recommend him. He has for years discharged with singular ability and devotion the office of secretary of the Congress. By his bravery, determination, application, integrity and grit, he has captivated the imagination of the youth of that land. He has come in touch with labour and the peasantry. His close acquittance with European politics is a great asset in enabling him to assess ours.

"And those who know the relations that subsist between Jawaharlal Nehru and me know that his being in the chair is as good as my being in it. We may have intellectual differences but our hearts are one. And with all his youthful impetuosities, his sense of stern discipline and loyalty make him as inestimable comrade in whom one can put the most implicit faith.

"Will not Jawaharlal's name be a red rag to the English bull?—Whispers another critic...If a decision is really right for us, it ought to be right for the whole world. If in choosing our President we have to take into consideration what English statesmen will think of our choice, we show little courage of our convictions....The English prizes honesty, bravery, grit and outspokenness all of which Jawaharlal has in abundance. Even if, therefore, British statement are to be considered in making our choice, Pandit Jawaharlal suffers from no disqualification....All things considered, therefore, my advice to those concerned is to cease to think of me and to call Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the high office with the fullest confidence and hope."[6] Gandhi sent a telegram to the Indian National Congress, Lahore, on 19 August 1929 recommending the name of Jawaharlal Nehru for presidentship of Congress. "Your wire. Whilst Thanking You Unable Accept Honour. Consider Self Unfit. Apart from Want of Energy It Is Well Understood Am Out Of Tune With Many Things Done Congressmen. My Occupancy Chair Can Only Embarrass Everybody Including Myself. Pray Elect Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru."[7] In a telegram to Motilal Nehru on 20 August 1929, Gandhi explained briefly, "...Could not preside as am out of tune. Much going on under Congress name. Have again recommended Jawahar's name. See no use my presiding."[8]

Jawaharlal Nehru sent a telegram to Gandhi on 21 August 1929, "Beg of you not to press my name for presidentship."[9] Gandhi explained to Jawaharlal Nehru thus on 22 August 1929, "....I felt bound to express my opinion to the committee in Lahore in reply to their wire. It is enough for your self-respect that you do not want the crown....I have simply pressed your name as of a principle....If you are not to be the helmsman, the only alternative I can think of this juncture is re-election of Father, or failing, that, of Dr. Ansari, Can you think of any other name?"[10]

On 28 September 1929, the All Indian Congress Committee met at the Ganga Prasad Verma Memorial hall.[11] The principal item of the agenda was election of the president at Lahore Congress. Mahatma Gandhi who was elected, having refused to reconsider his decision, in spite of repeated requests.[12] The previous afternoon members of the AICC met informally at the residence of the Maharaja of Mahmudabad and held a prolonged discussion on the election of the president. Gandhi who took part in the informal discussion, patiently heard the views expressed from different quarters, but held strongly to his previous decision not to accept the Congress chair. Thus Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's election was, therefore, a foregone conclusion.[13]

Pandit Motilal Nehru next stated that the meeting was convened specially to elect a president for the forthcoming Congress in place of Mahatma Gandhi was expressed his unwillingness to accept the office.[14] Before asking the members to propose new names, he invited Mahatma Gandhi to give his reasons for the refusal.[15]

Mahatma Gandhi, addressing the meeting said that he had private discussions on the matter with several members of the AICC.[16] He, in fact, wanted to see if such private discussions could create such an impression on him as to make him alter his mind. The discussions, however, brought nothing fresh to light. He would, therefore, adhere to his original decision of refusing the kind offer.[17] He was well aware of the fact that he was disappointing numerous friends, well-wishers and supporters.[18] Indeed Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had specially come down to Simla to persuade him to accept the Congress chair. He himself had pondered over this question, but to no effect.[19] He felt that his hands were too weak to hold the reins of the Congress.[20] It might be that he was committing yet another Himalayan blunder. He hoped it was so. But if it were, he was prepared to take the consequences and pay the penalty.[21] His own view was that the step he was taking was in the best

interest of the country.[22] He felt that he would serve the Congress much better if he were out of the presidential chair.[23] He asserted that it should never be mistaken that there would be any lack in his devotion to the cause of the Congress Party.[24] He would continue to put every ounce of his energy into it. He would never spare himself in carrying out the Calcutta Congress programme.[25] Only he did not deem himself fit for the presidentship. It was his nature never to undertake a task for which he considered himself unfit.[26]

After this explanation from Mahatma Gandhi, proposals for new names were invited. Balkrishna Sharma from Kanpur proposed the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.[27] At this, Pandit Gauri Shanker Misra of Allahabad intervened saying that the AICC should make a further attempt to persuade Mahatma Gandhi to accept the Congress chair.[28] Pandit Motilal, however, intervened and pointed out this was done jointly and severally by the AICC members throughout the day, but to no purpose, and to him it appeared that any fresh attempt would have the same result.[29]

After some further parley and listening to the views of T.A.K. Sherwani,[30] Gauri Shanker Misra proposed the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, but Patel not consenting, the proposition fell through.[31]

Only Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's name was duly proposed and seconded. He was thus declared elected amidst loud cheers.[32]

It is interesting to note that in 1927, Jawaharlal's candidature for Congress presidentship was proposed in the higher circles of the party, and it led to a comprehensive communication between Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru. Ultimately, Dr. M.A. Ansari was made the Congress President for the Madras session.

On 27 April 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru in a communication from London, with Mahatma Gandhi reacted thus: "I did not send you any cable last week as I could not hit upon a sentence short enough and intelligible enough to convey my meaning. With more thought I adhere to my opinion expressed last week that on the whole it will be better if I am not chosen President. This disinclination is perhaps not due to the reasons you mention. Whether I am President or not I do not suppose. I shall keep apart from political activity when I return home. I have begun to feel strongly that a *laissez faire* attitude and trusting to Providence to right matters is a very feeble way of combating evil. I do

not of course imagine that any individual can do much, but if everyone decided to wait and see, nothing would ever be done. Here far away from India it is exceedingly difficult to appreciate fully the position at home and I cannot, therefore, say exactly what I ought to do on my return, although I have general ideas on the subject. Under the circumstances and for the reasons I mentioned briefly in my last letter I do not feel inclined to welcome the proposal about the Presidentship. You and others in India are likely to be better judges. Personally, I should have thought that Ansari would be the best choice."[33]

Gandhi informed Motilal Nehru on 19 June 1927, "Things, as they are shaping in the Congress, confirm the opinion that it is not yet time for Jawaharlal to shoulder the burden. He is too high-souled to stand the anarchy and hooliganism that seemed to be growing in the Congress, and it would be cruel to expect him to evolve order all of sudden out of chaos. I am confident, however, that the anarchy will spend itself before long and the hooligans will themselves was a disciplinarian. Jawaharlal will come in then. For the present, we should press Dr. Ansari to take the reins. He won't control the hoolingans. He will let them have their way; but he may specialize in the Hindu-Muslim question and do something in the matter. It will be quite enough work for him in the coming year to solve the almost insoluble problem."[34]

After a fortnight, Gandhi again wrote to Motilal Nehru: "...that Dr. Ansari was the only possible president....I did not at all believe that his occupancy of the presidential chair would in any way diminish the weight of any settlement arrived at by the Congress. In my opinion, if Dr. Ansari is chosen, a reasonable settlement has a better chance of being adopted by the Congress."[35]

On 20 July 1927, Gandhi explained to Jawaharlal Nehru thus: "Sarojini Devi suggested under pressure from Mahmudabad and Jinnah that I should press Father to accept the Presidential chair for the coming. I totally dissented from her view and told her that Dr. Ansari was the only possible President, though even he will be able to do precious little. Things are going from bad to worse, and it is quite plain that we have not yet drunk the last dregs. But I regard all this rising of the poison to the surface as a necessary process in national up-building."[36]

On 10 August 1927, Gandhi wrote to M.A. Ansari,[37] "I am sure you have not made the mistake of supposing that I have sponsored your election[38] because I considered you to be a brilliant political thinker or

anything near that state. The country has acclaimed your election with one voice because you are a true and good Mussalman...Hindu-Muslim unity is a passion with you. Your election is a demonstration, in spite of the madness raging round us, that the country is thirsting for domestic peace, and that it is sick over dishonesty, fraud, immorality and violence committed in the sacred name of religion."

"Gandhi at first said no other man than Jawahar could be thought of best, on the second say he added that if you declined, the only other man who could be considered possible was Vallabhbhai Patel....As regards yourself, I told him plainly that there was a conflict between my head and heart. While there was not the shadow of a doubt in my mind that you were the one man who had any chance of success in the very difficult position of Congress President for 1928 that chance appeared to me to be a very feeble one and I would naturally not like you to court failure. It is certainly not fair to press it on you after your long absence from the country."[39]

In 1929, Mahatma Gandhi chose Jawaharlal Nehru in preference to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and by doing so, he strongly indicated in his writings of the time that he had the best choice in doing so. Indeed, he saw in Nehru a hope for the future—a youngman who could lead the Congress and the country in the best possible way. Besides Gandhi looked worried over the swift drift towards radicalism and communism in the youth. "He saw in Nehru's stewardship with his magnetic possibility a way of securing the youth's allegiance to Congress ideology and programme. Nehru's election was indeed a tribute to the youth of India. Gandhi was also deeply troubled by Nehru's drift to the far left, as the latter, being very strongly attracted to Marxism, was then in his extremist phase. Nehru was critical of the moderate and middle-of-the road policies. It was hoped that the responsibilities of the high office and the need to harmonise the conflicting view points would in due course restrain and moderate his exuberance. In any event, if the Congress were to adopt the goal of complete independence, Jawaharlal was the right person to lead the organization for he was an ardent champion of independence in the past."[40]

Gandhi explained in the AICC meeting held at Lucknow on 28 September 1929, when Jawaharlal Nehru was elected president of the forthcoming Lahore session. "I know my name was proposed and elected by a majority of votes, but I find myself quite unfit for such a heavy responsibility, though it is a great honour....I assure you that in every

programme adopted by you at the Lahore Congress, I would be with you, I feel I can do more work by not becoming the President of their year's Congress and I assure the house that I am firm on my words of responsibility that I gave at Calcutta....I am not to run away from the coming battle on the 1st January 1930. I shall willingly extend every help in formulating the programme and scheme for Congress work. What I wish from you is to discard this futile mentality that if Gandhi is not on the chair or Motilal not in the front, the Congress would collapse. You should stand boldly on your conviction of heart and push the work ahead."[41]

At another occasion, Gandhi lauded Nehru's qualities thus: "He is undoubtedly an extremist thinking far ahead of his surroundings. But he is humble and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point. He is pure as crystal. He is truthful beyond suspicion. He is a knight *sans peur, sans reproche.* The nation is safe in his hands."

The choice for the presidential chair was Jawaharlal Nehru who was almost the youngest President, the Congress ever had. Greatly impressed and influenced by the patriotic fervour of Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi by the writings and speeches of George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell and Keynas and by the world-wide political repercussions of the French Revolution and the Irish struggle for freedom,[42] he was at that time the President of the Indian Trade Union Congress, Secretary of the Independence of India League and was intimately connected with the youth movement. He later on confessed, "I am against British rule in India; very strongly so....'[43]

"It was not his (Gandhi's) style to accept an office in institutional politics; he preferred to operate as a super-president....A number of factors influenced Gandhi's decision. The foremost was his own belief in Jawaharlal's qualities of leadership."[44]

After he was appointed General-Secretary of the Indian National Congress at its session in Calcutta in 1928, Nehru made himself busy in organising and strengthening the party at its all levels. This he did by inspecting the Congress provincial headquarters, he himself inspected half a dozen provinces and extended his advice for their smooth and better functioning.[45] Besides he showed much interest and enthusiasm in matters of recruitment of a new members and during 1929 their number rose to 4,77,440.[46] His contact with various sections of Indian communities and regular tours amongst peasants, workers and labourers

based in the rural areas enabled him to associate them with the Indian National Congress.

"To Gandhi, Nehru was the rightful helmsman of the Indian National Congress, and he, in fact, wished to separate him from Subhas Chandra Bose, so that the young leaders who wanted to break away from Britain, could not dominate the decision at Lahore. Nehru indeed was critical of the moderate and middle-of-the-road policies of the Congress leadership. Gandhi was deeply troubled by Nehru's drift to the far left, as the latter, being strongly attracted to Marxism, was then in his extremist phase. The rationale behind such a momentous decision was that the future lay in the hands of the younger generation and in Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi saw this hope for the future. Rebutting the arguments of those who feared that this transfer of power from the old to the young might prove disastrous to the Congress, Gandhi said, "He (Nehru) is undoubtedly an extremist thinking far ahead of his surroundings. But he is humble and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point."[47] He was also sure that the responsibility was certain to chasten and mellow the youth to face the challenges with fearlessness.[48]

Gandhi, therefore, saddled Nehru with responsibility and astutely drove a wedge between the two young leaders. Moreover, "...it was worth having in the chair a figure of glamour and integrity who would keep active within the Congress, wide following among the students and the intelligentsia."[49] The Viceroy expressed his apprehension and informed the Secretary of State on 11 October 1929, "His selection in any case will give impetus to the left which it may be difficult to control. It would appear at first sight that the youngers have proved too strong for the older school."[50]

Subhas Chandra Bose commented on Gandhi's decision thus: "For the Mahatma, the choice was a prudent one, but for the Congress Left Wing it proved to be unfortunate, because that even marked the beginning of a political rapprochement between the Mahatma and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and a consequent alienation between the latter and the Congress Left Wing....It was essential that he (Gandhi) should win over Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru if he wanted to beat down the Left Wing opposition and regain his former undisputed supremacy over the Congress."[51]

Sarojini Naidu wrote to Nehru, "It is both your Coronation and crucifixion..." I feel that you have been give it challenge as well as

offered a tribute, and it is the challenge that will transmute and transfigure all your noblest qualities into dynamic force, courage and vision and wisdom."[52]

In his correspondence with his friends, it is evident that Nehru expressed the mood of unwillingness and unhappiness for his elevation to the Congress chair, "I have just been elected", he wrote to R. Bridgeman, "to preside over the next session of the Indian National Congress. I tried my best to get out of this, but circumstances were too strong for me. I am not at all happy about it."[53] To S.A. Brelvi he wrote, "I am an object to sympathy rather than congratulations. I have been quite clear in my mind that my election as President would reduce my effectiveness in many directions."[54] He informed Francis J. Pratt, a member of the Foreign Policy Association, New York, "The Presidentship of the Indian National Congress to which I have selected is not a very soft or pleasant job."[55] And to Gandhi, he wrote, "I realise now more than I have ever done before that it is not possible to tide a number of horses at the same time....I am convinced that I was a wrong choice. You were the only possible President for the occasion and the year."[56]

Nehru opined in his *Autobiograhpy,* "I am seldom felt quite so annoyed and humiliated as I did at the election. It was not that I was not sensible of the honour, for it was a great honour, and I would have rejoiced if I had been elected in the ordinary way. But I did not come to it by the main entrance or even a side entrance: I appeared suddenly by a trap-door and bewildered the audience into acceptance...My pride was hurt, and almost I felt like handling back the honour. Fortunately, I restrained myself from making an exhibition of myself, and stole away with a heavy heart.

"Probably the person who was happiest about this decision was my father....My election was indeed a great honour and a great responsibility for me."[57]

It was unique in that a son was immediately following his father in the presidential chair. He was one of the youngest presidents of the Congress: he was just forty years old. "I think Gokhale was about the same age and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (though he is little older than me) was probably under forty when he presided...As statesmanship has seldom been considered one of my virtues, and no one has accused me of possessing an excess of learning, I have escaped so far the accusation of age though my hair has turned grey and my looks betray me."[58]

Regarding the reception of the Congress President at Lahore, *The Tribune* in its headlines reported, "The Lakhs Join President's Procession: Hurling Sea of Humanity: Muslims and Hindus Unite: Unbounded Enthusiasm."[59]

On 25 December, the special train carrying Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President-elect of the Indian National Congress, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Pandit K. Santhanam, Srinivasa Iyengar and other leaders steamed in at the Lahore Railway Station. The crows at the railway platform became 'mad', and it surged and swayed making it impossible for him to alight. Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew, chairman of the reception committee, struggled hard to reach the footboard to greet the President. Sardar Mahgal Singh, the General Officer commanding, Lala Duni Chand and Dr. Mohammed Alam were virtually jammed in the crowd. "When after tarrying in his compartment for a little less than half-an-hour in the hope that order would be restored, Pandit Jawaharlal ventured to come out, he was almost mobbed. It was a severe trial for him to walk from the station platform to the portico.'[60] Thundering cries of 'Long Live Revolution' and Jawaharlal Ki Jai were raised.[61]

Outside the railway station, in the vast *maidan* countless human heads were visible, and this sea of human heads was fed by steams of visitors from the *mufassil.* [62] People were perched on the tops of the trees and the roofs of the railway buildings. On both sides of the roads there were crowds of anxious men and women to have *darshan* of the young national leader.[63] While the procession had not yet started from the railway station, the historic station, the historic Anarkali was palpitating with life, and shoulders were rubbing against shoulders. The people gathered to do honour to the Congress President were in *lakhs.*[64] As a prominent political worker remarked: "Rome could not have accorded a more magnificent welcome to Caesar."[65]

The booming of the crackers marked the departure of the procession from the railway station. It was led by Lala Duni Chand of Lahore on horse back and beside him rode Sardar Sardul Singh, followed by Lala Thakur Das, the secretary of the city Congress Committee. The mounted volunteers presented an impressive appearance and the lady volunteers clad in *khaddar saris* and led by Miss Zutshi lent a peculiar charm to the procession.[66] Unlike all old Presidents of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru was riding a horse—it was a beautiful white charger.[67] Behind him were the G.O.C., Sardar Mangal Singh and other officers of the volunteer corps.[68] The most striking feature was the Sikh Cavalry.

Dressed in white spotless, *khadi* and wearing stylish turbans, the Namdharis with their flowing beards presented a thrilling sight.[69] Besides a Sikh *jatha* on foot with banners in their hands and a large body of Congress volunteers completed the rear.[70]

In the heart of the city, the admiring citizens distributed fruits and sweets. Wending its way through the narrow streets of Old Lahore, the procession emerged from the Lahori Gate and proceeded towards Anarkali, ablaze from end to end with multi-coloured electric lights.[71] Flags and buntings were fluttering in the air: there was a colourful storm. About a dozen triumphant arches were erected in the bazaars and they were tastefully decorated.[72]

Placards were displayed plentifully bearing such eloquent inscriptions as these: "Uncrowned King of India, We Pay Our Home to You", "Welcome Bapu, Starving Indian Looks to You ", "Lalaji Dead or Living is an Example of True Service to His Country", "Indians Want to be Free in India, Englishmen are Free In England; Battles of Freedom are won with Deeds, not with Words; Nothing is greater than Patriotism; One who loses his liberty loses half his Virtue; Sacrifice Yourself at the Altar of Liberty; Hindus, Mohammedans and Sikh Unite Now or to be Slaves for ever; Gandhi is the Symbol of Truth, Truth the Symbol of Immorality; Jawaharlal is the Symbol of Youth and Youth is the Symbol of Action:' and "We Welcome You to the Land Dyed Red by Dyer and O'Dwyer."[73]

As the pocession proceeded, flowers and garlands rained from the balconies and from the roofs where not even an inch of available space was left unoccupied. Tumultuous scenes of hilarity marked the showering of flowers on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by Pandit Motilal Nehru and other members of the family from the balcony of the Bhalla's shop in Anarkali.[74] A 'proud father' honouring a worthy son, it was a sight that gladdened the hearts of the multitude.

Jawaharlal Nehru was waving his right hand in response to lusty cheerings of the crowds, and with his left hand he was holding the reins tight. He was apparently overwhelmed with the affection of his countrymen, as abundant as the roses showered on him.[75]

The nationalist Muslims took a prominent part in the reception and vied with their Hindu brethren in doing honour to the Congress President.[76]

The procession was stoped for sometime in front of the *Zamindar* office, where a decorated arch had been erected.[77] Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and the Khilafat leaders including Maulana Abdul Qadir, Maulana Abdul Haq and Maulana Habibul Rahman and other greeted the Congress President.[78] Besides, an address of welcome in behalf of the *Zamindar* was presented to him. The address *inter alia* stated that he was greeted with the greatest honour that India had in her possession inasmuch as he had been unanimously elected the first citizen of the nation.[79] In the address, the hope was expressed that unless the national demand was accepted by the British Government by the mid-night of December 31, he would unfurl the flag of national independence on the banks of the *Ravi* and would thus carry the Calcutta Congress resolution to its logical conclusion.[80]

A welcome address was presented to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by the Arya Swarajya Sabha. In welcoming him, it expressed its heartfelt appreciation of the services of Jawaharlal Nehru and urged that the Congress session should consist of more deliberative functions than demonstrative ones.[81] It further urged that Congress funds should be established for carrying on Congress work by its executives and for broadcasting the gospel of the Congress.[82] It also suggested that a 'Congress Gazettee' should be started for propaganda and some workable programme for bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity which would be highly beneficial to the country's interests.[83]

For at least two hours the arrival of the procession in Anarkali, all vehicular traffic was suspended owing to the dense crowds in the streets. The procession, in its magnitude and enthusiasm, was unprecedented in the annals of the Punjab. Never before had such scenes of enthusiasm been witnessed. The police were conspicuous by their absence, but large reserves of police were kept in readiness at the various police stations. The unprecedented crowds made considerable demand on the patience and perseverance of the people and the crowd kept order and discipline, and bore the crush cheerfully. The procession had to traverse three miles, the most crowded routes of the city. It swelled as it proceeded through the roads and by lanes of the town.

On the termination of the procession, Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a few words to the volunteers appreciating their services, and thanked the citizens of Lahore for the reception, respect and honour shown to him.[84] Thereafter, he proceeded to Lala Lajpat Rai's residence to pay respects to his wife and had tea there.[85] He, then, left for Lajpat Rai Nagar and amid loud shouts from the several thousand persons.[86]

On 15 December 1929, the volunteers' camp was opened at Lajpat Rai Nagar on the banks of river *Ravi*. The flag hoisting ceremony was performed in the presence in the presence of about 10,000 persons.[87] The camp was visited, throughout the day, by old and young, men and women, children, should boys and college students. The wet ground owing to the rains and the proximity of the river *Ravi* made the reception committee to take special protective measure. Accordingly the ground was thickly covered with straws and on it were spread *chaddars* to enable thousands of those who attended to squat.[88] over 15,000 tickets had been issued long before the session was to open. The result was that the *pandal* was fully packed and the volunteers found the task of controlling the crowds very difficult on occasions.[89]

The Tribune stated. "Congress Sessions Opens: Enthusiastic Scenes: Pandal Fully Packed.[90]

The opening of the forty-fourth session of the Indian National Congress was marked with scenes of unprecedented enthusiasm. On 29 December, from early morning in spite of the intense cold streams of people began to pour into Lajpat Rai Nagar and by the time the sun rose, the traffic on Grand Trunk Road had become very congregated. A host of men worked the whole night to arrange seats to give the final touches to the *pandal*.[91]

Indeed the decorations were simple and consisted of tri-coloured buntings and coloured light. Swaraj flags were most prominently displayed and fixed on *kanats* all-round. The *pandal* was modelled on lines of the Kanpur Congress, but the special feature was the very marked display or numerous mottos in English, Hindi and Urdu tuned more to the advanced views than to those which had hitherto mostly found expression in the Congress *pandals*. These mottoes were displayed by the Reception Committee and, therefore, reflected the political colour of the committee.

The leaders' dais, had on it the motto, 'Unite, Unite, Unite', while one facing the delegates declared, 'Up With Revolution.' The one facing the visitors said, 'Freedom's Battle Once Begun, Bequeathed by Bleeding Sire to Son; Though Raffed Oft Is Always Won'. Another motto prominently displayed was 'Country First Religion Next.' Among other mottoes were: 'India for Indians', 'Only Wear Khaddar And No Other', Promote Prohibition', World Peace Depends On India's Freedom', 'Repression Will Nail The Coffin of The British Empire', 'Patriots Never Die', 'Long Live Lalaji', 'Beware Of Candid Friend', 'Remove Curse

Of Untouchability,' and 'Attain Home Culture, Home Rule and Home Industry.'[92]

Nehru wished to live in a moderate way in a camp at Lahore. He was not happy when learnt of a huge procession in a chariot. He wrote a letter to K. Santanam dissuading him from making such an elaborate arrangement, "....I would like to stay in the camp., Father does not want to go to the camp. I think you had better arrange for me and my wife and perhaps Indira, though I am doubtful about her, to live in the camp. The others will have to put up somewhere else. Father would probably like to have more than two or three persons with him. There is my mother, my two sisters, Ranjit, just to mention a few.

"I entirely approve of your charging everyone. As the General-Secretary is going to develop into the President, you need only allow for him once and not twice. But I think you should give free quarters and food to the AICC staff.

"I am amazed to read about the chariot. I thought you had some sense but it is obvious that the Lakshmi Insurance Co. has gradually driven it out of your head.[93] Do you expect me to go about Lahore on a bullockcart? I wish your committee will have the courage to do away with the procession completely or at most just to drive through certain selected routes, the whole thing not lasting more than an hour. It is absurd waste of time and energy to spend five or six hours over this. As for riding on horseback, I have no objection to it but what on earth are you going to do for five or six hours? I do not at all like this idea of Barat. Be original and say that you will have no procession.[94]

Punctually at 5 p.m. leaders began to arrive amid thunderous shouts of *Bandemataram* . The president entered in a pocession headed by a band followed by Saifud Din Kitchlew, Motilal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Mohammed Ali, Sarojini Naidu, M.A. Ansari, Madan Mohan Malaviya, J.M. Sen Gupta, Vallabhbhai Patel, Srinivasa Iyengar, Sardul Singh and Jamnalal Bajaj.[95]

The proceedings commenced with shouts of '*Bandemataram*' *Bharat Mata Ki, Jai'*, and *Jawaharlal Ki Jai.'* Considerable cheers were won by a band of national scouts of Amritsar by singing a song extolling the sacrifice of Jatain Das and those of his way of thinking.[96]

The officials of the volunteer corps were introduced to Jawaharlal Nehru by Mangal Singh and Kumari Lajyawati.[97] The flag post was 125 feet high, and as the flag was hoisted, continuous cheers came from

the crowd and the cries of *Bandemataram.*[98] The president while addressing the volunteers said, "I have just unfurled the National Flag of Hindustan. What is the meaning of this flag? It is one of the symbols of India's freedom. It is a symbol of India's unity. But remember that when a country's flag is raised then until there is a single living soul in the country it is not brought down. Today you have met on this occasion, when the National Congress is holding its most momentous session and is going to take a great step in the fight for the country's freedom. Today, when you have raised this Flag, are you not fired by the determination that it shall not be lowered? I want you to take a vow that you will have sufficient strength to protect this flag, and that you are ready to sacrifice your lives for freedom. This flag is of the Indian National not of any section of it. If any man is working under it for any section, then you are lowering this flag. But any man who stands under this flag is an Indian, not Muslim, or Sikh or Hindu or Christian or Parsi, and the freedom of India is his chief objective. I, therefore, wish you to take a vow that until there is a single person alive to protect the nation's honour, you will not let it be lowered until India is free."[99] Continued cries of *Bandemataram* and *Bharat Mata Ki Jai* followed.

In the middle of December 1929, there were false rumours about the programme of saboteurs during the Lahore Congress.[100] At this, there was every possibility of thinning down the attendance.[101] The prominent leaders of the Punjab expressed much concern over these rumours and tried their best to falsify this kind of propaganda being made.[102] The following appeal over the signatures of Maulana Abdul Qudir, Lala Dunichand of Lahore, Dr. Mohammad Alam, Lala Giridhari Lal, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Lala Dunichand of Ambala, Maulana Zaffar Ali Khan, Dr. Satyapal, Sheikh Serajuddin Peracha, Dr. Kahn Chand Deve, Maulana Habibul Rahman, Lala Pindi Das, Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, Sardar Kishan Singh, Choudhary Afzal Haq, Dr. Parshu Ram Sharma, Mehta Anand Kishore, Nandlal of Jaranwala, Mohamad Abdullah of Ludhiana, Daulat Ram Khanna of Jullumdur, Hayat Mohammad, Santram Seth of Amritsar, Haji Nurudin of Lyallpur, Chintram Thaper and Ghulam Mohiuddin.[103]

"We have learnt with deep pain and strong resentment that some of our kith and kin are, at the instigation of interested agencies and persons, spreading baseless and false rumours to scare away the people of the province from attending the forthcoming session of the Indian National Congress to be held at Lahore. Some of them say that machine

guns have been requisitioned and that the whole of Lajpat Rai Nagar will be blown up. Others say that the Congress *pandal* will be bombarded and everybody found in the vicinity will be put in chains. Another rumour is that reactionaries and anti-Congresswalas will smash the Congress *pandal* to pieces.

"We know full well that the heart of the Punjab is sound and that such rumours can produce no effect on the patriotism of the people of this province. We also know that the circulars of the government and the threats of various agencies cannot effect the determination of the Punjab to join the Congress.

"We would have treated all the efforts of the detractors with the contempt they deserve, but we find that everyday these rumours and threats are gaining strength and wide currency, and we apprehend that they are having their baneful effect:

"We, therefore, issue this note of warning to all our fellow countrymen to be on their guard. Do not please believe any of these rumours, do not be frightened, do not be afraid, do not be worried over these things. Pay no heed to this malicious propaganda and think it as your duty to contradict such rumours and to neutralise the mischief created by the hostile activities of the enemies of this country.

"We earnestly appeal to our countrymen that they should deem it a sacred duty, an urgent obligation and a noble task to attend the Congress session. Even if you have some difference with the Congress, do not stay away. Join the Congress and get those differences adjusted. The Congress is our national assembly. It is striving to win our freedom. It is our common platform, it is our common body. To help the Congress is to help the Motherland and to harm it is to ruin our future. We expect every Punjabi to do his duty. We are fully conscious of the heroic nationalism of our province and we are confident that notwithstanding the persistent efforts of the enemies of the Motherland to injure our cause, the whole of the Punjab will help the Congress with a devotion and zeal the like of which cannot be found anywhere.

"Our province is on its trial and we hope to acquit ourselves admirably. The fate of our country is being moulded. Our future is being shaped. Can the Punjab keep away at such a juncture? It is unimaginative that this land of heroes should be found wanting at this hour.

"It is needless to mention that we are earnestly working for the success of the session with a devoted heart. We have deemed it our sacred duty to place ourselves unreservedly at the disposal of the Reception Committee, and we all are doing what we can to ensure the success of the Congress. The Congress first and every thing else afterwards. We would have been disloyal to our country if we had permitted our differences to cloud our vision or to prevent us from doing our utmost. At this juncture we know of only one thing, and that is to make a united and combined effort to make the Congress session a brilliant success—a success which it would be difficult to equal, much less to excel."[104]

"First Streaks of Dwan Are Visible: Let Us End Our Differences", this was the welcome address given by Malik Barkat Ali, a prominent Muslim Leaguer of the Punjab.[105] "On the eve of the Indian National Congress meeting in the ancient and historic city of Lahore amid environments recalling all the glory and romance of Moghul India, let me extend to this exalted and first institution of the country the warmest welcome of the citizens of this province in general and that of the 'living hearts of Islam', in particular.

"The Congress is today meeting in an atmosphere charged with momentous possibilities of the future. The long night of political domination and servitude through which the country has been passing stems to have reached its end and the first streaks of dawn are almost visible, heralding the birth of a new India for Indians. The Labour Party in pursuance of its settled and fixed programme of freedom for all has set on the course of its Indian Policy with firm and resolute steps and through its responsible spokesman, Mr. Wedgwood Benn, whose name will certainly figure high in the role of that distinguished land of British statesmen whose ensign was human freedom, is sending massages of hope and comradeship that leave nothing to be desired.

"In a situation of this kind developing with startling rapidity and with certain prospect of our now passing into sunlight from shadows that have hitherto enveloped us, the duty of Indian leaders in taking stock of the existing conditions and removing all those elements and factors that make for division and have produced those wide gulfs and divergencies of opinion to which Mr. Wedgwood Been so feelingly and so sympathetically referred in his last speech on Mr. Fenner Brockway's motion is not only paramount but compelling and absolute. If there is one question that to my mind calls for urgent and immediate solution,

being the very source of disagreements and differences that have been our scourge in the past, I will say it is that of representation of different peoples and communities in the legislatures of the country.

"The Nehru Committee certainly made an honest and a very sincere attempt to solve it, but their solution has failed to give general satisfaction and there are large groups whom it is impossible to leave alone sulking outside in their tents. Let there be set in motion another resolute and supreme effort to understand the points of view of those who are still differing. I am at once with Sir Mohammad Shafi that this attempt must be continued to the few and select first rate men of Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and other communities. Will the Congress leaders rise to the height of the occasion and extend the hand of fellowship and brotherhood to those who have so far failed to see eye to eye with the Congress constitution as evolved last year through the Convention.

"I will not rip up the main points of disagreement in this statement. They are not secret and have with sufficient loudness and clearness been proclaimed from various platforms. But I do desire to emphasize two main considerations, without which in my humble judgment unanimity will be impossible. So far as the question of electorate is concerned let it be definitely and clearly realized by the Muslim leaders who belong to the all-India Muslim Conference School that separate electorates must be scrapped and can have no place in a responsible constitution; however, much they may have functioned in transition period of development. Nationalism can never be compatible with sectionalism or communalism, and if India is to develop a responsible policy, she must first learn to walk in paths of collective nationalism. This point must, therefore, be fully grasped by those who have hitherto stood for and are still swearing by separate electorates.

"On the Congress side, let there be a little shedding of idealism and distinct approach towards reality and the hard facts of the situation. Universal suffrage is yet a dream and an ideal. By all means widen and lower franchise as much as possible, but do recognise that even the maximum lowering possible in the existing conditions must far short of the ideal of universal suffrage. Nor is it possible to devise formulas which will meet the end that universal suffrage was designed to meet, namely, reproduction of population ratio in the voting register. Therefore, why insist on universal suffrage of franchise that will give to various communities ratios of their population in the electoral list.

Why not boldly proclaim that if mixed electorate are accepted by the dissenting group, the Congress will certainly accept the alternative of reservation of seats on population basis. The Madras Congress actually passed a resolution to this very effect, and this in my humble judgement is a sure and unfailing cement to bring together all discordant groups and evolve that unity and concord which will discomfit all our enemies and end most of our vital differences..."[106]

Mangal Singh, G.O.C. of Congress volunteers at the Lahore session reminisced thus: "We recruited about 2,000 volunteers and gave them training. Dr. N.S. Hardiker came there. He sent his men. So we trained them. We had also a Girl's Volunteers Corps in which three Zutshi sisters and their mother, Mrs. Zutshi, took prominent part. Lajyawati and Zutshi were the Lady Commanders. At the Ravi Camp, we had a tough time.... I was busy in the management affairs to control the situation. The main discussion was about the Independence solution. At the end, at about 12 o'clock, the resolution was carried. There was a great excitement and joyous celebrations. After that, I requested Panditji to come out and hoist the National Flag of Independence. At mid-night, we hoisted the national flag. From there he went to the volunteers' camp, and we had a dance there, Pathan dance particularly; for the whole night singing and dancing went on. Nehru also danced with us."[107]

The following is the number of delegates who attended the Lahore Congress.[108]

N.W.F.P.	40
London Branch of Congress	2
Punjab	400
Andhra	101
Maharashtra	86
South African representative	1
Karnataka	36
Ajmer	75
Delhi	61
Sind	76
Bombay	19
Gujarat	68

Representative from Japan Branch	1
U.P.	543
Bengal	77
Bihar	282
Utkar	14
Burma	43
Assam	8
Tamil Nadu	148
C.P. Hindustani	55
C.P. Marathi	29
Kerala	8
Berar	25

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18. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
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21. *Ibid.*
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23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, Sherwani opined that Congress was greater than Mahatma Gandhi, and when he was offered the National Crown, he refused. 'The Congress Crown would never go abegging'.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. See Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 12572.

    There was a suggestion that Jawaharlal be elected President of the Madras session of the Congress to be held in December 1927.
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61. *Ibid.*
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64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*, Silver coins were showered on him.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid.*
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107. Transcript of interview, with Mangal Singh in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
108. *The Tribune*, 4 January 1930.

18

Do or Die*

I have taken such an inordinately long time over pouring out what was agitating my soul to those whom I had just now the privilege of serving. I have been called their leader or, in military language, their commander. But I do not look at my position in that light. I have no weapon but love to wield my authority over anyone. I do sport a stick which you can break into hits without the slightest exertion. It is simply my staff with the help of which I walk. Such a cripple is not elated when he is called upon to bear the greatest burden. You can share that burden only when I appear before you not as your commander but as a humble servant. And he who serves best is the chief among equals.

Therefore, I was found to share with you such thoughts as were welling up in my breast and tell you, in as summary a manner as I can, what I expect you to do as the first step?

Let me tell you at the outset that the real struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial as always do. The burden, I confess, would be almost unbearable. I have to continue to reason in those circles with whom I have lost my credit and who have no trust left in me. K know that in the course of the last few weeks I have forfeited my credit with a large number of friends, so much so, that they have begun to doubt not only my wisdom but even my honesty. Now I hold my wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose; but my honesty is a precious treasure to me and I can ill-afford to lose it. I seem however to have lost it for the time being.

Friend of the Empire

Such occasions arise in the life of the man who is a pure seeker

* Gandhi's speech at the AICC meeting, Bombay, 8 August 1942.

after truth and who would seek to serve humanity and his country to the best of his lights without fear or hypocrisy. For the last fifty years I have known no other way. I have been a humble servant of humanity and have rendered on more than one occasion such service as I could to the Empire, and here let me say without fear of challenge that throughout my career never have I asked for any personal favour. I have enjoyed the privilege of friendship as I enjoy it today with Lord Linlithgow. It is a friendship which has outgrown official relationship. Whether Lord linlithgow will bear me out, I do not know, but there is a personal bond between him and myself. He once introduced me to his daughter. His son-in-law, the A.D.C., was drawn towards me. He fell in love with Mahadev more than with me and Lady Anna and he came to me. She is an obedient and favourite daughter. I take interest in their welfare. I take the liberty to give out these personal and sacred tribute only to give you an earnest of the personal bond which exists between us; and yet let me declare here that the personal bond will never interfere with the stubborn struggle on which, if it falls to my lot, I may have to launch against Lord Linlithgow, as the representative of the Empire. I will have to resist the might of that Empire with the might of the dumb millions with no limit but of non-violence as policy confined to this struggle. It is a terrible job to have to offer resistance to a Viceroy with whom I enjoy such relations. He has more than once trusted my word, often about my people. I would love to repeat that experiment, as it stands to his credit. I mention this with great pride and pleasure. I mention it as an earnest of my desire to be true to the Empire when that Empire forfeited my trust and the Englishman who was its Viceroy came to know it.

Charlie Andrews

Then there is the sacred memory of Charlie Andrews which wells up within me. At this moment the spirit of Andrews hovers about me. For me he sums up the brightest traditions of English culture. I enjoyed his confidence. There were no secrets between us. We exchanged our hearts every day. Whatever was in his heart he would blurt out without the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was a friend of Gurudev but he looked upon Gurudev with awe. He had that peculiar humility. But with me he became the closest friend. Years ago he came to me with a note of introduction from Gokhale. Pearson and he were the first rank specimens of Englishmen. I know that his spirit is listening to me.

Then I have got a warm letter of congratulations from the Metropolitan of Calcutta. I hold him to be a man of God. Today he is opposed to me.

Voice of Conscience

With all this background, I want to declare to the world, although I may have forfeited the regard of many friends in the West, and I must bow my head low; but even for their friendship or love I must not suppress the voice of conscience—prompting of my inner basic nature today. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology. Such a man knows exactly what it is? I do not mind how you describe it. That voice within calls to me: "You have to stand against the whole world although, you may have to stand alone. You have to stare in the face of the whole world although the world may look at you with blood-shot eyes. Do not fear. Trust the little voice residing within your heart. It says: "Forsake friends, wife and all; but testify to that for which you have lived and for which you have to die." Believe me, friends I am not anxious to die. I want to live my full span of life. And for me I put my span of life at 120 years. By that India will be free, the world will be free.

Let me tell you too that I do not regard England or for that matter America as free countries. They are free after their own fashion, free to hold in bondage coloured races of the earth. Are England and America fighting for the liberty of these races today? If not, do not ask me to wait until after the war. You shall not limit my concept of freedom. The English and American teachers, their history, their magnificent poetry have not said that you shall not broaden the interpretation of freedom. And according to my interpretation of that freedom I am constrained to say they are strangers to that freedom which their teachers and poets have described. If they will know the real freedom they should come to India. They have to come not with pride or arrogance but in the spirit of real earnest seekers of truth. It is a fundamental truth which India has been experimenting with for 22 years.

Congress and Non-violence

Unconsciously from its very foundations long ago, the Congress has been building on non-violence known as constitutional methods. Dadabhai and Pherozeshah who had held Congress India in the palms

of their hands became rebels. They were lovers of the Congress. They were its masters. But above all they were real servants. They never countenanced murder, secrecy and the like. I confess there are many black sheep amongst us, Congressmen. But I trust the whole of India today to launch upon a non-violent struggle. I trust because of my nature to rely upon the innate goodness of human nature which perceives the truth and prevails during the crisis as if by instinct. But even if I am deceived in this I shall not swerve. I shall not flinch. From its very inception, the Congress based its policy on peaceful methods included *swaraj* and the subsequent generations added non-violence. When Dadabhai entered the British Parliament, Salisbury dubbed him as a black man; but the English people defeated Salisbury and Dadabhai went to the Parliament by their vote. India was delirious with joy. These things, however, India has outgrown.

I will Go Ahead

It is, however, with all these things as the background that I want Englishmen, Europeans and all the United Nations to examine in their hearts what crime had India committed in demanding independence. I ask, is it right for you to distrust such an organization with all its background, tradition and record of over half a century and misrepresent its endeavours before all the world by every means at your command? Is it right that by hook or by crook, aided by the foreign press, aided by the President of the USA, even by the Generalissimo of China who has yet to win his laureate, you should present India's struggle in shocking caricature? I have met the Generalissimo. I have known him through Madame Shek who was my interpretor; and though he seemed inscrutable to me, not so Madame Shek; and he allowed me to read his mind through her. There is a chorus of disapproval and righteous protest all over the world against us. They say we are erring, the move is inopportune. I had great regard for British diplomacy which has enabled them to hold the Empire so long. Now it stinks in my nostrils, and others have studied that diplomacy and are putting it into practice. They may succeed in getting through these methods, world opinion on their side for a time: but India will speak against that world opinion. She will raise her voice against it. Even if all the United Nations opposed me, even if the whole of India forsakes me. I will say, "You are wrong. India will wrench with non-violence her liberty from unwilling hands." I will go ahead not for India's sake alone, but for the sake of the world. Even

if my eyes close before there is freedom, non-violence will not end. They will be dealing a mortal blow to China and to Russia if they oppose the freedom of non-violent India which is pleading with bended knees for the fulfilment of a debt long overdue. Does a creditor ever go to the debtor like that? And even when India is met with such angry opposition, she says, "We won't hit below the belt, we have learnt sufficient gentlemanliness. We are pledged to non-violence." I have been the author of non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet today you find me taking this strong language. I say it is consistent with our honour. If a man holds me by the neck and wants to drown me, may I not struggle to free myself directly? There is no inconsistency in our position today.

Appeal to United Nations

There are representatives of the foreign press assembled here today. Through them I wish to say to the world that the United Powers who somehow or other say that they have need for India, have the opportunity now to declare India free and prove their *bona fides.* If they miss it, they will be missing the opportunity of their lifetime, and history will record that they did not discharge their obligations to India in time, and lost the battle. I want the blessing of the whole world so that I may succeed with him. I do not want the United Powers to go beyond their obvious limitations. I do not want them to accept non-violence and disarm today. There is a fundamental differences between fascism and this imperialism which I am fighting. Do they get from India all they want? What they get today is from India which they hold in bondage. Think what differences it would make if India was to participate as a free ally. That freedom, if it is to come, must come today. It will have no taste left in it if today you who have the power to help cannot exercise it. If you can exercise it, under the glow of freedom, what seems impossible today will become possible tomorrow. If India feels that freedom, she will command that freedom for China. The road for running to Russia's help will be open. The Englishmen did not die in Malaya or on Burma soil. What shall enable us to retrieve the situation? Where shall I go, and where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this vast mass of humanity to go a glow in the cause of world deliverance, unless and until it has touched felt freedom? Today they have not a touch of life lift. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre is to be put into their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow, but today.

I have pledged the Congress and Congress will do or die.

The response in the rural areas was spontaneous. People came out in large numbers on hearing Gandhi's arrest, and their retaliation resulted into attacks on courts, burning of government records and to bring police stations under popular control. In a few weeks, the machinery of the government was paralysed and dislocated, and the worst effect was, glaringly visible in U.P., C.P. and Berar, Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Andhra and Karnataka. At places railway engines were decorated with national flags.

The people of Bombay Presidency showed much enthusiasm organised capability and high sense of patriotism on the eve of the arrest of the front-rank leadership in the country. The Shivaji Park and the Gowalia Tank were the main centres of activities of *satyagrahis* in Bombay. In spite of warnings by the police, meetings were held at these two places and numerous other places. The government, however, took prompt action and soon issued an order banning public meetings. Picketing was made unlawful and the flogging was revived by the Whipping Act. The fire-arms were taken under police control and people were ruthlessly suppressed.

The textile mill-hands struck work and this process continued for sometime. The mass demonstrations, of course an irregular future, continued up to September in spite of the imposition of curfew by the government. The popular demonstration in various parts of the presidency had deep linkage with the celebration of Independence Day. Gandhi Jayanti, Tilak anniversary and other days of national importance.

As elsewhere, students in Maharashtra were fairly active in taking put processions, holding meetings and distributing Congress bulletins. The police *lathi*-charged them severely, but this kind of repression did not deter their enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. Their excitement for the movement proved a great asset as the massage of Mahatma Gandhi reached the youths and the masses through their consistent efforts.

Both urban and rural regions of Maharashtra participated whole-heartedly in the movement. Strikes, processions and demonstrations were the glaring phenomenon. Students, both of schools and colleges, in prominent towns, *i.e.,* Poona, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Sholapur and Satara showed much excitement, fervour and patriotic activities. Students hoisted national flags on their institutions and other means of communications were paralysed.[1]

The people of Satara organised numerous mass meetings not caring for the ban on such gatherings by the government. Picketing of courts, post offices and other government offices was the main programme of *satyagrahis* in this district. The strike of thousands of workers in Iron and Steel Factory at Kirloskar Wadi for fifteen days was a glaring phenomenon in this region. This factory supplied material of the war-efforts of the *Raj* and the workers felt annoyed about it. This strike by thousands workers brought about a huge loss in the manufactures of the biggest steel factory in this region.

In the Yerwada Jail, the condition of political prisoners was most deplorable. The living condition, food and water supply, cleanliness and other basic amenities were much defective, and time again, when the demands for their improvement was made, no action was taken by the jail authorities. When a batch of about twenty political prisoners escaped from the jail, brutal *lathi*-charge was made, and many inmates sustained serious injuries.[2]

In Gujarat much enthusiasm and excitement was visible at various levels amongst the people. A protest meeting was held in Ahmedabad on 10 August which was attended by thousands of people. Besides, processions attended by men and women were organised in different localities of the town. The students also organised separate processions in which they raised anti-*Raj* slogans. The local bureaucracy acted swiftly and sought the help of police which used *lathi*-charge and other means to disperse the crowd. This, however, did not diminish the spirit of defiance amongst the people and the students. Mills and commercial markets were closed. The government did not hesitate to display even tanks and machineguns in order to generate fear amongst the people. The mob even burnt numerous government buildings including railway stations and post offices. Telephone and telegraph connections were destroyed and consistent propaganda about the Congress programme was made amongst the people.

In Ahmedabad, about one hundred textile mills were closed and the strike in numerous Tata establishments was a glaring phenomenon. The trade union movement, thus, showed its strength, unity, solidarity and better organization at many places. The Government showed much concern over the steps taken by the trade union movement as the loss accrued to it during the war was phenomenal. The demonstration of repression by the government to bring back the workers to the factory proved effective but to much cost.

The Children's Day, Women's Day and Harijan's Day were celebrated in different parts of the town. A large number of children organised processions in numerous wards, distributed national flags and various kinds of leaflets amongst the people. The novel feature of this model was that children handed over leaflets to many policemen of the town. The women also showed much activity in taking out processions in different wards of the town and raised anti-*Raj* slogans. In spite of obstacles placed by the police, they did not stop till they could traverse the scheduled distance.

Besides the celebration of the Municipality Day on 4 September led to much excitement amongst the people in Ahmedabad. A crowd of about fifteen thousand persons gathered in front of the municipal building. It was also attended by the members of the staff of municipality who showed spirit of discipline and unique strength of oneness. Besides the meeting was attended by a number of Municipal Commissioners. The flag hoisting ceremony was performed midst much excitement and fervour. At this the police acted promptly, a few Municipal Commissioners were arrested. At this *hartal* was observed in the town: even many mills were closed as a mark of sympathy for those who were arrested. Besides, the whole of the town was flooded with 'Quit India' posters which were pasted on walls, chowks and prominent buildings. The tri-colour flags were visible on numerous buildings.

On the Harijan Day observed on 7 October, people of Gujarat showed sense of solidarity, unity and strength. It almost synchronised with the birthday celebration week of Mahatma Gandhi. The programme of spinning continued with much interest and fervour; the copies of *Harijan* were sold amongst the people, and funds were also collected from them. Even salt was sold by the school-children who happened to move from house to house.

In U.P. the movement spread like wild fire and people from every walk of life answered to the call of Mahatma Gandhi. In Banaras, Allahabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Gorakhpur, Moradabad, Ballia, Meerut and other towns the movement gained movement at various levels. Complete *hartals,* meetings, processions, and courting arrests were the manor plans on which the programme of the movement was based. Besides much damage was caused to government property to paralyse the functioning of the administrative machinery.

In Allahabad, a call for general strike was given on 9 August. Schools and colleges were closed and there was a huge demonstration by the students. The procession of students in spite of obstacles by the police force on the way, wended its way towards the district courts, and at last succeeded in hoisting the tri-colour flag on the courts building. The police *lathi*-charged and later on firing on students proved fatal for one student.[3] In another procession, when police resorted to firing, a fourteen years old boy was killed.

In Kanpur, a major industrial town of the United Provinces, the industrial labour took a prominent part. The local leaders and the students showed their sense of patriotism by participating in processions and meetings. The mill-workers struck work during August. Damage was done to government property including a few post offices and telegraph offices. In brutal *lathi*-charge by the police, people suffered much.

Agra did not lag behind in showing its sense of patriotism. Like other towns of U.P., students came out of schools and colleges and brought about extensive damage to government property,[4] mainly government buildings, railway stations. As usual, there were indiscriminate arrests and convictions.

In Gorakhpur district, thousands, anti-government slogans were raised. This kind of agitation took birth in some of the prominent villages like Doheria and Palli. The District Magistrate took stern measures against the processionists, by seeking support of the army which was commissioned for firing on the mob. About fourteen persons were reported dead on the spot on account of firing by the army personnel. Besides more than a hundred persons were severely injured.

In Ballia, there was much excitement amongst the people, and when the call for *hartal* was given, all observed it in organised and disciplined manner. Like other towns of U.P., all the schools and colleges were closed, and the students organised themselves in a procession raising slogans against the *Raj*. The *satyagrahis* of the district damaged the government property including railway lines, means of communications, post offices, district jail, police stations and other buildings. So far so Chittoo Pandey declared independence for Ballia. The bureaucracy, however, acted very severely and ordered the police to fire on the mob. As a result thereof two died on the spot and several persons were injured. The repression by police and army' reached its highest degree.[5]

In Banaras, people got much excited at the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other members of the Congress Working Committee. A huge procession which culminated into a meeting, also attended by a large number of students, was taken out in the city. When the students marched towards the court to press the government servants to tender their resignations, they were severely *lathi*-charged. In spite of severe injuries, their enthusiasm was not mitigated and so far as one of the students was able to enter the court-premises, pulled down the Union Jack and in its place hoisted the national flag. The students also divided themselves into batches and traversed the suburban villages in order to make the movement broad-based by giving publicity to the message of Mahatma Gandhi amongst the village-folk.

The Banaras Hindu University showed the spirit of patriotism when the students disobeyed the orders of the Vice-Chancellor. The army was called in and the students were beaten and made to vacate the campus. The Congress flag flying on the main gate of the university was pulled down, torn to pieces and trampled under foot by British tommies.

The government directed the Vice-Chancellors and the Principals to close down their universities and colleges. Many students were rusticated when they were found guilty of participating in the movement. When some of them refused to leave the hostels, food supplies were stopped to them. At places, parents were threatened with the orders of dismissals from their services if they failed to check their wards in participating in the movement. The help of army was sought in cases when the boys had become adamant in disobeying government orders.

The damage caused to the government property was immense. The railway track from Banaras to Lucknow and Allahabad and Patna to Gaya was damaged at numerous places. Telegraph wires and the electric poles connecting them met the same fate. A few railway stations were burnt and the cash accumulated therefor the sale of tickets and booking of goods was looted. National Flags were hoisted at numerous places. Grain godowns were looted and burnt.

Similar style of *satyagrahis* was witnessed in several towns of U.P., *i.e.* in Meerut, Khurja, Moradabad, Faizabad, Ghazipur, Gonda, Bahraich, Azamgarh, Chanda, Sikandra, Fatehpur Sikri, Mathura and Bulandshahr. A large number of processions were organized and government property worth lakhs or rupees was damaged. *Lathi*-charges

and firings by the police were the common phenomenon. Many student-picketers were severely beaten. *Khadi Bhandars* were burnt to ashes at many places.

Central Provinces also responded well to the general calls for processions, strikes and meetings of common people, given by the leadership of the Indian National Congress. The resentment of the people against the *Raj* reached its highest pitch, mainly on account of the cooperation of the people and the student community. In the major city like Nagpur, the capital of the province, whereas, mills and factories struck work, the students boycotted their schools and colleges and participated in various kinds of demonstrations.

A huge procession, of thousands of people including students, was taken out in the town on 11th August. In spite of severe *lathi*-charge, many of them managed to reach the district courts where they called upon the lawyers to come out and join them in the procession and the *hartal.* On account of continued *lathi*-charges by the police in the campus of the courts, many students sustained serious injuries. A student, however, managed to remove the Union Jack and hoist the tricolour in its place. The police shot at the student had he was seriously wounded.[6]

On the following day, the mob of people damaged government property worth lakhs of rupees. The damage was done, as usual, to post offices, railway tracks and police stations. Their records were burnt. Police resorted to firing on the mob and scores of people were killed and hundreds of them were wounded.

The movement was not confined to the urban areas only. It also touched upon the rural areas. In the *tahsil* of Umerer, people showed much excitement and anager by bringing about a huge damage to railway station and its records, railway lines and telegraph wires. They also captured two police stations of Kuhi and Monda.

Other prominent towns of Central Provinces which struck work and actively participated in the movement were Jabalpur, Betul, Sagar, Bilaspur, Narsinghpur, Damoh, Mandala, Katni, Hoshangabad, Chhindawara, Itarsi and Patheria. At some places, currency notes worth lakhs of rupees were looted. Telegraph and telephone wires were damaged. The government reacted with much sternness and used methods like *lathi*-charges, firings, arrests and convictions.

At Ramtek, a suburb of Nagpur, the furious mob adopted a novel method of paralysing the machinery of the government. At first, they ransacked the police station and the *tahsil* court, and, thereafter, captured the police officers and the *Tahsildar*. They were forcibly made to wear khadi clothes along with Gandhi caps.[7]

Women also showed much awakening for the movement. They participated in *prabhatpheris*. They approached numerous Indian officials of the region and requested them to tender their resignations. To advocates, they appealed for suspension of their legal practice. They did succeed in their patriotic mission, and many of them showed enthusiasm for the movement. As a result thereof, they were the worst sufferers and as many as three hundred of them were arrested in the Sagar district only.

As in other provinces, Orissa too was fully awakened to the call of the Quit India Movement. Specially in Cuttack, Balasore and Koraput the activities of Congress *satyagrahis* were remarkable. In Koraput, four police stations were captured, a few bridges were destroyed and also excited the rural masses against the *Raj*. Similarly, at Balasore where people were agitated, they burnt the government records in some departments. So far so, they caught hold of a few policemen and made a bon-fire of their uniforms.

Besides *Maran Sena, i.e.,* Suicide Squads were formed in some regions of the province. The volunteers of this *Sena* defied the police, and although a few were killed on account of police firing, they carried on their activities without any kind of fear in their hearts. Telephone and telegraph lines were damaged; railway lines were dislocated and a few government buildings in Cuttack were burnt. The government, as a measure of punishment, collected thousands of rupees from villages which damaged the government property. Besides, many persons were arrested.

People showed much enthusiasm on the eve of the Gandhi Jayanti celebrations. *Satyagrahis* organised themselves in numerous processions and also resorted to picketing of liquor and *ganja* shops. So far so about a hundred villages declared themselves as free territories. The police and military were requisitioned to curb these activities; repression was let loose on *satyagrahis* as a result of which many were injured and killed.

The condition of political prisoners in the jails of Orissa was deplorable. Most of them were lodged in 'C' class. The living space

provided to them was inadequate. The food was very d.rty. The unhygienic conditions prevailed there. In Bahrampore Central Jail, political prisoners protested against the bad food and unhygienic living conditions in all the barracks of the jail. To punish them severely, Gurkha soldiers were called who dealt with them mercilessly. Many political prisoners were injured seriously.

In some of the princely states, the movement was regenerated by the Congress *satyagrahis,* students of schools and colleges, labourers and mill-works, women and children. These States were Mysore, Bhopal, Indore, Baroda, Travancore, Udaipur, Rewa, Kotah, Porbunder and a few others. Like British India regions, meetings and processions were organised, students came out of their schools and colleges and mill-hands struck work for sometime in these states. The authorities suppressed the movement ruthlessly by *lathi*-charges, shootings and killings and convinctions.

In Central India, the Praja Mandal of Indore and Bhopal States People's Conference carried on their *satyagraha* as a mark of sympathy for the movement. They gave the ultimatum to the State government to disown the British *Raj* in their State and instead establish responsible government. Besides processions and meetings, *hartals* were observed by commercial centres,[8] schools and colleges. Extensive damage to government property was done in India. In both the states, repressive measures were the orders of the day. *Lathi*-charges and firings by the police were very common and numerous *satyagrahis* were put behind the bars.

In the Baroda State, the response of the people for the movement was spontaneous. The Praja Mandal took initiative in mobilising the people, and they included numerous textile and mill-workers of the State. The novel feature as the anti-*Raj* activity was to tender resignations by members of the Baroda Legislative Council, teachers and *Patels, Prabhatpheris* were taken out to impress upon the people about the implications of the movement.[9] People's Day was organised to protest against the excessive repression by police and army.

The damage done to government property including railway lines in the Baroda State was immense. As a result of damaged tracks, railway trains were delayed and there was much difficulty in travelling in the State. The resignations of numerous officials treatly paralysed the functioning of the State machinery.

Similarly in Travancore much excitement was witnessed by persons representing different professions. In Travancore mainly students spearheaded and movement and gave a call for general strike in the university, college at Trivandrum. There was so much excitement and fervour amongst the students that they hoisted national flags on their institutions. Specially at Nagarcoil, they showed much political activity by distributing leaflets and fixing national placards at numerous places. The State administration used all repressive measures against the students and threatened them, through a notification, of dire consequences if they continued the agitation in the State. Their hostels were searched by the police and many of them were put behind the bars. The police also used coercion in making some students to attend their classes.

In.the premier princely State of Mysore, people showed a united stand in taking out largely attended processions and organising meetings. Some of the mill-hands observed *hartal* as a mark of respect for Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders. Students of schools and colleges did not attend their classes for a few days. Women also came out to participate in the national movement. In spite of the ban promulgated by the Government of Mysore, people carried on these activities with full vigour and excitement. The mob burnt the city post office, damaged numerous electric poles and railway lines. To suppress the movement, the State Government used all repressive means. They made use of severe *lathi*-charge. So far so, the tanks and armoured cars were used against processionists. About two hundred persons were killed and many more in number were lodged in the State Jail.

The national upsurge amongst the students was a unique phenomenon during the Quit India Movement. In their firm determination to 'Do or Die,' they came out of their institutions in a large number in various regions of India. They took out processions raised slogans and made use of hand-bills to put obstructions in the smooth functioning of the government. To curb their activities, the government used repressive me^sures which were phenomenal in magnitude. The government sent a warning note to the principals of various institutions asking them to warn their students to participate in the national struggle. And if the students disobeyed their orders, they were to be resticated.

The Congress made use of bulletins for propagating its ideas and ideology amongst the people. The news-sheets were cyclostyled secretly

and distributed by its workers amongst the masses. Several printing presses were made active in this programme. Besides radio broadcast was used as a powerful media for the movement. But this did not last for a long time. Numerous presses were directed after organised police raid; their licences were cancelled and their owners and operators were arrested and convicted. Similarly Congress radio was detected and the persons working on it were severely punished.

After a few days, Gandhi informed Linlithgow that his Government were wrong in precipitating the crisis.[10] He stated that the Government resolution justifying the step was full of distortions and misrepresentations.

"The Government of India should have waited at least till the time that I inaugurated mass action. I had publicly stated that I contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So would I have dealt with every deficiency if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitate action of the government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action, might make world opinion veer round to the Congress as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of grounds for the government rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the AICC. You should have take advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand.

"The resolution says, 'The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have disappointed in that hope.' I suppose, 'wiser counsels' here mean abandonment of its demand by the Congress. Why should the abandonment of a demand legitimate at all times he hoped for by a government pledged to guarantee independence to India? It is a challenge that could only be made by immediate repression instead of patient reasoning with the demanding party? I venture to suggest that it is a long draft upon the crudality of mankind to say that the acceptance of the demand 'would plunge India into confusion.' Anyway the summary rejection of the demand had plunged the action and the

government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause.

"The Government resolution says, 'The Government-General-in-Council has been aware, too for sometime past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities, directed among other things to the interruption of communications and public utility services, the organisation of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of government servants and interference with defence measures including recruitment.' This is a gross distortion of the reality. Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action has been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner as if the Congress was preparing for violent action. Everything was openly discussed among Congress circles, for nothing was to be done secretly. And why is it tampering with your loyalty if I ask you to give up a job that is harming the British people. Instead of publishing behind the backs of principal Congressmen the misleading paragraph, the Government of India, immediately they came to know of 'the preparations' should have brought to book the parties concerned with the preparations. That would have been an appropriate course. By their unsupported allegations in the resolution they have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing.

"The whole Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular movement avowedly non-violent?

"The Government resolution further says, 'The Congress is not India's mouthpiece. Yet in the interests of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy, its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to full nationhood.' It is a growing libel thus to accuse the oldest national organization of India. This language lies ill in the mouth of a government which has, as can be proved from public attaining freedom and sought to suppress the Congress by hook or by crook.

"The Government of India have not condescended to consider the Congress offer that if simultaneously with the declaration of independence of India, they could not trust the Congress to form a stable provisional government, they should ask the Muslim League to do so and that any National Government formed by the League would be

loyally accepted by the Congress. Such an offer is hardly consistent with the charges of totalitarianism against the Congress.

"Let me examine the government offer. It is that as soon as hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself with full freedom of decision, and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party, the form of government which she regards as more suited to her conditions. Has this offer any reality about it? All parties have not agreed now, will it be any more possible after war, if the parties have to act before independence is an their hands? Parties grow up like mushrooms, for without proving their representative character the government will welcome them as they have done in the past, if the parties oppose the Congress and its activities, though they may do lip homage to independence frustration is inherent in the government offer. Hence the logical cry of fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom, will be the formation of a truly representative government, whether provisional or permanent, be possible. The living burial of the authors of the demand has not resolved the deadlock. It has aggravated it.

"Then the resolution proceeds, 'The suggestions put forward by the Congress Party that the millions of India uncertain as to the future are ready, despite the sad lessons of many martyr countries, to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders, is one that the Government of India cannot accept as true representation of the feelings of the people of this great country. I do not know about the millions. But I can give my own evidence in support of the Congress statement. It is open to the government not to believe the Congress evidence. No imperial power like to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Great Britain to a avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motive. The Congress seeks to kill both imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interest of its own apart from that of the whole of India as the world."

The following passage from the resolution is interesting. "But on them (the Government) there lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, or safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her

people without fear or favour." All I can say is that it is a mockery of truth after the experience in Malaya, Singapore and Burma. It is said to find the Government of India claiming to hold the "balance" between the parties for whole creation and existence it is itself demonstrably responsible.

One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can, and may I say than even you can. In that misery he tried to forget his old quarrel with imperialism. He dreads much more than I do the success of Nazism and Fascism. I argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally.[11]

If notwithstanding the common cause, the Government's answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will no wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the allied cause that weighted with the British Government as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of imperial policy. This determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and participated repression.

The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But the slaughter or truth accompanying the butchery and enforced by the falsity of which the resolution is seeking adds strength to the Congress position.

It causes me deep pain to have to send you this letter. But however, much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for a reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy. Do not disregard this pleading of one who claims to be sincere friend of the British people.

Heaven guide you

The Viceroy replied to this letter on 22 August 1942 and expressed

thus: "have read, I need not say, when you have been good enough to say in your letter, with very close attention, and I have given full weight to your views. But I fear in the result that it would not be possible for me either to accept the criticism which you advance of the resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council, or your request that the whole policy of the Government of India should be reconsidered."

On 23 September 1942, Gandhi wrote to the Secretary, Government of India, Home Department:[12] "In spite of the chorus of approval sung by the Indian Councillors and others, of the present government policy in dealing with the Congress I venture to assert that had the government but awaited at least my contemplated letter to H.E. the Viceroy and the result thereafter, no calamity would have overtaken the country. The reported deplorable destruction would have most certainly been avoided.

"In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent. The wholesale arrests of the Congress leaders seemed to have made the people wild with the rage to the point of losing self-responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, to withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely the Government have ample resources to deal with any over act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness.

"Since I am permitted to receive newspapers, I feel that I own it to the government to give my reaction to the said happenings in the country. If the government think that as a prisoner I have no right to address such communications, they have but to say so and I will not repeat the mistake."

On the new year's eve 1942, Gandhi wrote a personal letter to Linlithgow in which he stated,[13] "This is a very personal letter. Contrary to the Biblical injunction I have allowed many suns to set on a quarrel I have harboured against you. But I must not allow the old year to expire without disburdening myself of what is ranking in my breast against you? I had thought we were friends and should still love to think so. However, what has happened since the 9th August last makes me wonder whether you still regard me as a friend? I have perhaps not come in such close touch with any occupant of your *gadi* as with you.

"Your arrest of me, the communique you issued thereafter, your reply to Rajaji and the reasons given thereof, Mr. Amery's attack on me and much else I can catalogue go to show that at some stage or other you must have suspected my *bond fides*. Mention of other Congressman in the same connection is by the way. I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress. If I have not ceased to be your friend why did you not before taking drastic action, send for me, tell me of your suspicions and make yourself sure of your facts?

"I am quite capable of seeing myself as others see me. But in this case I have failed hopelessly. I find that all the statements made about me in government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth.

"I have so much fallen from grace that I could not establish contact with a dying friend. I mean Prof. Bhansali who is fasting in regard to the Chimur affair.

"And I am expected to condemn the so called violence of some people reputed to be Congressmen, although I have no data for such condemnation save the heavily censored reports of newspapers. I must own that I thoroughly distrust these reports. I could write much more but I must not lengthen my tale of woe. I am sure, what I have said, is enough to enable me to fill in details.

"You know I returned to India from South Africa at the end of 1914 with a mission which came to me in 1906, namely, to spread truth and non-violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life. The law of *satyagraha* knows no defeat. Prison is one of the many ways of spreading the message. But it has its limits. You have placed me in a palace where every reasonable creature comfort is insured. I have freely partaken of the letter purely as a matter of duty, never as a pleasure, that they have wronged innocent men. I had given myself six months. The period is drawing to a close. So is my patience. The law of *satyagraha* as I know it, prescribes a remedy in such moments of trial. In a sentence it is, 'Crucify the flesh by fasting.' That some law forbids its use except as last resort. I do not want to use if it I can avoid it.

"This is a way to avoid it. Convince me of my error or errors, and I shall make ample amends. You can send for me, or send someone who knows your mind and can carry conviction. There are many other ways if you have the will.

"May I expect an early reply?

"May the New Year bring peace to us all."

Lord Linlithgow reacted thus[14] "Thank you for your personal letter of December 31st, which I have just received. I fully accept its personal character, and I welcome its frankness. And my reply will be, as you would wish it to be, as frank as entirely personal as your letter itself.

"I was glad to have your letter, for, to be as open with you as our previous relations justify. I have been profoundly depressed during recent months first by the policy that was adopted by the Congress in August, secondly, because while that policy gave rise, as it was obvious it must throughout the country to violence and crime (I say nothing of the risks to India from outside aggression) to word of condemnation for that violence and crime should have come from you, or from the Working Committee. When you were first at Poona I knew that you were not receiving newspapers, and I accepted that as explained your silence. When arrangements were made that you and the Working Committee should have such newspapers as you desired. I felt certain that the detail those newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you as much as it has us all, and that you would be anxious to make your condemnation of it categorical and widely known. But that was not the case, and it has been a real disappointment to me, all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress Party. You may take it from me that the newspapers accounts you mention are well founded—I only wish they were not; for the story is a bad one. I know well the immense weight of your great authority in the Congress movement and with party and those who follow its lead, and I wish I could feel, again speaking very frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you. (And happily, while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the consequences, whether as law breakers, with the results that involves, or as victims.)

"But if I am right in regarding your letter to mean that in the light of what has happened you wish now to retrace your steps and dissociate yourself from the policy of last summer, you have only to let me know and I will at once consider the matter further. And if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay in what respect I have done so, and tell me what positive

suggestion you wish to put to me. You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned to read with the same close attention as ever any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight and approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feelings and your motives.

At this Gandhi felt despaired and showed a sense of impatience over the contents of Linlithgow's letter.[15]

My letter of 1st December was a growl against you. Yours is a counter growl. It means that you maintain that you were right in arresting me and you were sorry for the omissions of which in your opinion, I was guilty.

The inference you draw from my letter is, I am afraid, not correct. I have re-read my letter in the light of your interpretation, but have failed to find your meaning in it. I wanted to fast and should still want to if nothing comes out of our correspondence and I have to be a helpless witness to what is going on in the country including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land.

If I do not accept your interpretation of my letter, you want me to make a positive suggestion. This, I might be able to do only, if you put me among the members of the Working Committee of the Congress.

If I could be convinced of my error or worse, of which you are evidently, I should need to consult nobody, so far as my own action is concerned, to make a full and open confession and make ample amends. I have not any conviction of error. I wonder if you saw my letter to the Secretary to the Government of India (H.D.) of 21st September '42. I adhere to what I have said in it and in my letter to your of 14th August 1942.

Of course, I deplore the happenings that have taken place since 9th August last. But have I not laid the whole blame for them at the door of the Government of India? Moreover, I could not express any opinion on events which I cannot influence or control and of which I have but a one-sided account. You are bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads. But you will not expect me to do so. Such reports have, before now, often proved falliable. It was for that reason that in my letter of 31st December, I pleaded with you to convince me of the correctness of the information on which your conviction was based. You will perhaps appreciate my fundamental difficulty in making the statement you have expected me to make.

This, however, I can say from the house top, that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been. You may not know that any violence on part of Congress workers, I have condemned openly and unequivocally. I have even done public penance more than once. I must not weary you with examples. The point I wish to make is that on every such occasion I was a free man.

"This time the retracing, as I have submitted, lies with the government. You will forgive me for expressing an opinion challenging yours. I am certain that nothing but good would have resulted if you had stayed your hand and granted me the interview which I had announced, on the night of the 8th August, I was to seek. But that was not to be.

"Here, may I remind you that the Government of India have before now owned their mistakes, as for instance, in the Punjab when the later Dyer was condemned, in the U.P. when a corner of a mosqao in Cawnpore was restored, and in Bengal when partition was annulled. All those things were done in spite of great and previous mob violence.

"To sum up:

"(1) If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends.

"(2) If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress you should put me among the Congress Working Committee Members.

"I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse.

"If I am obscure of have not answered your letter fully, please point out the omissions and I shall make an attempt to give you satisfaction.

"I have no mental reservation.

"I find that my letters to you are sent through the Government of Bombay. This procedure must involves some loss of time. As time is of the essence in this matter, perhaps you will issue instructions that my letters to you may be sent directly by the Superintendent of this camp."

The Viceroy was happy over Gandhi's unequivocal condemnation of violence. In his communication dated 25 January 1943 he gave vent to his feelings thus:[16] "Many thanks for your personal letter of the 19th January, which I have just received, and which I need not say I have read with, close care and attention. But I am still, I fear, rather in the

dark. I made clear to you in my last letter that, however reluctantly, the course of events, and my familiarity with what has been taking place, has left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorised and fully empowered spokesman at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the sad campaigning of violence and crime, and revolutionary activity which has done so much harm, and so much injury to India's credit, since last August. I note what you say about non-violence. I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past. But the events of these last months, and even the events that are happening today, show that it has not met with the full support of certain of your trusted followers and the mere fact that they may have fallen short of an ideal which you have advocated is no answer to the relations of those who have lost or suffered severe injury as a result of violent activities on the part of Congress and its supporters. And I cannot I fear accept as an answer to your suggestion that 'the whole blame' has been laid by you yourself at the door of the Government of India. We are dealing with facts in this matter, and they have to be faced. And while, as I made clear in my last letter, I am very anxious to have from you any thing that you may have to say or any specific proposition that you may have to make, the position remains that it is not the Government of India, but Congress and yourself that are on their justification in this matter.

"If therefore you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of the 9th August and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further. It is of course very necessary to be clear on that point, and you will not, I know, take it amiss that I should make that clear in the plainest possible worlds. "I will ask the Governor of Bombay to arrange that any communication from you should be sent through him, which will I trust deduce delay in its transmission."

Gandhi's reaction to popular violence that broke out on 9th August 1942 was however, different which he explained in a letter to Linlithgow on 29 January 1943.[17] "I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not with to imply by clearness, simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded till the last breath

that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of the opinion you hold that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on the 9th August last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrests of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the government responsible for the reported violence? You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against fascism in every shape or form. It tenders cooperation in war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nation-wide cooperation possible.

"Is all this open to reproach?

"Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated civil disobedience . But that by itself cannot constitute an objection since the principle of civil disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact". Even that civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek from you an appointment.

"Then, take the unproved and in my opinion unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me by so responsible a Minister as the Secretary of State for India.

"Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit.*

"But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of the murders as clearly, as I hope, you do. My answer is that the government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not anyway less so, because it is organised on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic law of tooth for tooth, by that of ten thousand for one—not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic law, *i.e.,* of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all powerful Government of India.

"Add to this tale of woe, the privations of the poor millions due to India-wide scarcity, which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been *bona fide* national government responsible to a popularly elected assembly.

"If then I cannot get shooting balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for *satyagrahis*, namely, a fast according to capacity, I must commence after the early morning breakfast of the 9th February, a fast for twenty-one days ending in the morning of the 2nd March. Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays my system refuses water. This time, therefore, I propose to add juice of citous fruits to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not be fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. The fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

"I am not making this letter this letter personal, as I did the two previous ones. They were in no way confidental. They were as mere personal appeal."

I am

Your sincere friend,

M.K. Gandhi

P.S.

The following was inadvertently omitted. The government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress, by its August resolution, asked nothing for itself. All its demands for the whole people. As you should be aware the Congress was willing and prepared for the government inviting Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah to form a national government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war and such governing being responsible to duly elected assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee, except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

The Viceroy reacted thus:[18] "Many thanks for your letter of 29th January which I have just received. I have read it, as always with great care and with every anxiety to follow your mind and to do full justice to your argument. But I fear that my view of the responsibility of Congress and of yourself personally for the lamentable disorders of last autumn remains unchanged.

"In my last letter I said that my knowledge of the facts left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement and you as its authorised and fully empowered leader at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the campaign of violence and crime that subsequently broke out. In reply you have reiterated your request that I should attempt to convince you that my opinion is correct. I would readily have

responded earlier to that request were it not that your letter gave no indication, such as I should have been entitled to except, that you sought the information with an open mind. In each of them you have expressed profound distrust of the published reports of the recent happenings, although in your last letter, on the basis of the same information, you have not hesitated to lay the whole blame for them of the Government of India. In the same letter you have stated that I cannot expect you to accept the accuracy of the official reports on which I rely. It is not, therefore, clear to me how you expect or even desire me to convince you to anything. But in fact, the Government of India have never made any secret of their reasons for holding the Congress and its leaders responsible for the deplorable acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism that occurred since the Congress Resolution of the 8th August declared a "mass struggle" in support of its demands, appointed you as its leader and authorised all-Congressmen to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement. A body which passes a resolution in such terms is hardly entitled to disclaim responsibility for the events that follow it. There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy to lead to violence; and that you were prepared to condone it; conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders. The general nature of the case against the Congress has been publicly stated by the Home member in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on the 15th September last, and if you need further information I would refer to it you. I enclose a complete copy in case the press versions that you must have seen were not sufficient. I need only add that all the mass of evidence that has come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached. I have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions, circulated in the name of the AICC; that wellknown Congressmen have organised and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder; and that even now an underground Congress organization exists in which, among others the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee plays a prominent part, and which it actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country. If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known it is because the time is not yet ripe but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world if you can. And if in the meanwhile you yourself, by any action such as you now

appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgement will go against you by default.

"I have read with surprise your statement that the principle cf civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi Settlement of the 5th March 1931 which you refer to as the 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact'. I have again looked at the document. Its basis was that civil disobedience would be 'effectively discontinued' and that certain 'reciprocal action' would be taken by government. It was inherent in such a document that it should be taken notice of the existence of civil disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that civil disobedience was recognised as being in any circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my government.

To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorised government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements described by yourself as open rebellion, to take place unchallenged; that should allow preparations for violence, for the interruption of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for the murder of police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and against the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of my government has throughout been to give you, and to give the Congress organization, every possible opportunity to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of the 14th July, and your declaration on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation and that after all it was an open rebellion are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to 'do or die'. But with a patience that was perhaps misplaced, it was decided to wait until the resolution of the All India Congress Committee made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude if government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

"Let me in conclusion say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and age, the decision that you tell me that you now have in your mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risks is clearly one that must be taken by you along and the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone.

I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification, and understand from your own previous writings that this was also your view."

Gandhi explained his working of mind to the Viceroy about Civil Disobedience Movement thus:[19] "I have to thank you for your long reply dated 5th instant to my letter of 29th January last.

"I would take your last point first, namely, the contemplated fast which begins on the 9th instant. Your letter, from a *Satyagrahi's* standpoint, is an invitation to fast. No doubt the responsibility for the step and its consequences will be solely mine. You have allowed an expression to slip from your pen for which I was unprepared. In the concluding sentence, of the second paragraph, you describe the step as an attempt 'to find an easy way out'. That you, as a friend, can impute such a base and cowardly motive to me passes comprehension. You have also described it as 'a form of political blackmail'? and you quote my previous writings on the subject against me. I abide by my writings. I hold that there is nothing inconsistent in them with the contemplated step. I wonder whether you have yourself read those writings.

"I do claim that I approached you with an open mind when I asked you to convince me of my error. A 'profound distrust' of the published reports, is in no way inconsistent with my having an open mind.

"You say that there is evidence that I (I leave my friends out for the moment) 'expected this policy to lead to violence' that I was 'prepared to condone it,' and that 'the violence that ensued, formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders.' I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did. I have suggested why it did. You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence. Surely there was nothing wrong in my asking you to show me

the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof could correspond to the canons of English jurisprudence.

"If the wife of a member of the Working Committee is actively engaged in 'planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism' she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests on 9th August last which I have dared to describe as leonine violence.

"You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal, or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile or that some of the evidence that the living persons can produce might become unavailable?

"I reiterate the statement that the principle of Civil Disobedience is implicitly conceded in the settlement of 5th March 1931, arrived at between the then Viceroy on behalf of the Government of India and myself on behalf of the Congress. I hope you know that the principal Congressmen were discharged before that settlement was even thought of. Certain reparations were made to Congressmen under that settlement. Civil Disobedience was discontinued only on conditions being fulfilled by the government. That by itself was, in my opinion, an acknowledgement of its legitimacy, of course, under given circumstances. It, therefore, seems somewhat strange to find you maintain that Civil Disobedience cannot be recognised as being in any circumstances legitimate by your government.' You ignore the practice of the British Government which has recognised its legitimacy under the name of 'passive resistance'.

Lastly you read into my letters a meaning which is wholly inconsistent with my declaration, on one of them, of adherence to unadulterated non-violence. For, you say in your letter under reply, that 'acceptance of my point of view should be to concede' that 'the authorised government of the country on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow movements to take place that would admit preparations for violence, interruptions of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for murders of police officers and others, to proceed unchecked.' I must be a strange friend

of yours whom you believe to be capable of asking for recognition of such things as lawful.

"I have not attempted an exhaustive reply to the views and statements attributed to me. This is not the place nor the time for such a reply. I have only picked out those things which in my opinion demanded an immediate answer. You have left me no loophole for escaping the ordeal I have set before for myself. I begin it on 9th instant with the clearest possible conscience. Despite your description of it as 'a form of political blackmail,' it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the highest tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal I shall go to the Judgement seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all powerful government and me as a humble man who had tried to serve his country and humanity through it.

"My last letter was written against time and, therefore, a material paragraph went in as post-script. I now send herewith a fair copy typed by Pyarelal who has taken Mahadev Desai's place. You will find the post-script paragraph restored to the place where it should have been."

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M.K. Gandhi.

Jawaharlal Nehru narrated political issues—national and international—thus in his *Autobiography:*[20] "...But there was no place in my work or my mind, and the responsibility that I had to shoulder often oppressed me very greatly, I could not align myself with various parties and groups. I did not even fit in with my closest colleagues. I could not function as I wanted to, and at the same time I prevented others from functioning as they wanted to. A sense of suppression and frustration grew and I became a solitary figure in public life, though vast crowds came to hear me and enthusiasm surrounded me.

"I was affected more than others by the development of events in Europe and the Far East, Munich was a shock hard to bear and the tragedy of Spain became a personal sorrow to me. As these years of horror succeeded one another, the sense of impending catastrophe overwhelmed me, and my faith in a bright future for the world became dim.

"And now the catastrophe has come. The volcanoes in Europe spit fire and destruction, and here in India I sit on the edge of another

volcano, not knowing when it may burst. It is difficult to tear myself away from the problem of the moment, to develop the mood of retrospection and survey these five years that have gone by, and write calmly about them.

"The reaction of the Spanish War on me indicates how, in my mind, the problem of India was tied up with other world problems. More and more I came to think that these separate problems, political or economic, in China, Abyssinia, Spain, Central Europe, India or elsewhere, were facets of one and the same world problem. There could be no final solution of any of them till this basic problem was solved. And in all probability there would be upheaval and disaster before the final solution was reached. As peace was said to be indivisible in the present day world, so also freedom was indivisible, and the world could not continue for long part free, part unfree. The challenge of fascism and nazism was in essence the challenge of imperialism. There were twin brothers, with this variation, that imperialism functioned abroad in the same way in the home country also. If freedom was to be established in the world not only fascism but nazism had to go, but imperialism had to be completely liquidated.

"This reaction to foreign events was not confined to me. Many others in India began, to some extent, to feel that way, and even the public was interested. This public interest was kept up by thousands of meetings and demonstrations that the Congress organised all over the country in sympathy with the people of China, Abyssinia, Palestine and Spain. Some attempts were also made by us to send aid, in the shape of medical supplies and food, to China and Spain. This wider interest in international affairs helped to raise our own national struggle to a higher level, and to lessen somewhat the narrowness which is always a feature of nationalism.

"But, inevitably foreign affairs did not touch the life of the average person, who was absorbed in his own troubles. The peasant was full of his growing difficulties, his appalling poverty, and of the many burdens that crushed him. The agrarian problem was, after all, the major problem of India, and the Congress had gradually evolved an agrarian programme, which though going far, yet accepted the present structure. The industrial worker was little better off and there were frequent strikes. Politically-minded people discussed the new constitution that had been imposed upon India by the British Parliament. The constitution, though giving some power in the hands of the British Government and their

representatives. For the Central Government a Federation was proposed which tied up feudal and autocratic states with semi-democratic Provinces, and was intended to perpetuate the British imperialist structure. It was a fantastic affair, which could never work, and which had every safeguard that the wit of man could devise to protect British vested interest. The Constitution was indignantly rejected by the Congress, and in fact there was hardly any one in India who had a good word for it.

"The Congress triumphed in the general election and there was a great argument as to whether we should accept ministries in the Provinces. Ultimately, it was decided that we should do so, but on the understanding that there would be no interference from the Viceroy or the Governors.

"New problems faced us in India. In most of the provinces Congress Governments were in power, and many of the ministers had spent years in prison previously. My sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, became one of the Ministers in the United Provinces—the first woman Minister in India. The immediate effect of the coming of the Congress Ministries was a feeling of relief in the countryside, as if a great burden had been lifted. A new life coursed through the whole country and the peasant and the worker expected big things to happen immediately. Political prisoners were released and a large measure of civil liberty, such as had not been known previously, was established. The Congress Ministers worked hard and made others work hard also. But they had to work with the old apparatus of government, which was wholly alien to them and often hostile. Even the services were not under their control. Twice there was a conflict with the governors and the ministers offered resignations. Thereupon the governors accepted the viewpoint of the Ministers and the crisis ended. But the power and influence of the old services—the Civil Service, the Police, and others—backed by the Governor and buttressed by the Constitution itself, were great and could make themselves felt in a hundred ways. Progress was slow and dissatisfaction arose.

"The record of the Congress Government was impressive, but all this good work could not solve the fundamental problems of India. That required deeper and more basic changes and an ending of the imperialistic structure which preserved all manner of vested interests.

"So conflict grew within the Congress between the more moderate and the more advanced sections. The first organised expression of this

took place in a meeting of the All India Congress Committee in October 1937. This distressed Gandhiji greatly and he expressed himself strongly in private. Subsequently, he wrote an article in which he disapproved of some action I had taken as Congress president.

"In India the old problems and conflicts continued and I had to face the old difficulty of how to fit in with my colleagues. It distressed me to see that on the eve of a world upheaval many Congressmen were wrapped up in these petty rivalries. Yet there was some sense of proportion and understanding among Congressmen in the upper circles of the organization. Outside the Congress, the deterioration was much more marked. Communal rivalry and tension had increased and the Moslem League, under Mr. M.A. Jinnah's leadership, was aggressively anti-nationalist and narrow minded and continued to pursue as astonishing course. There was no constructive suggestion, no attempt even to meet half-way, no answers to questions as to what exactly they wanted? It was a negative programme of hatred and violence, reminiscent of Nazi methods, what was particularly distressing was the growing vulgarity of communal organizations which was affecting our public life. There were of course many Muslim organizations and large number of Muslims who disapproved of the activities of the Moslem League and favoured the Congress.

"Following this course, the Moslem League inevitably went more and more astray till it stood openly against democracy in India and even for the portition of the country. They were encouraged in these fantastic demands by British officials, who wanted to exploit the Moslem League, as all other disruptive forces, in order to weaken the Congress influence. It was astonishing that just when it became obvious that small nations had no further place in the world, except as parts of a federation of nations, there should be this demand for a splitting up of India. Probably the demand was not seriously meant, but it was the logical consequence of the two nation theory that Mr. Jinnah had advanced. The new development of communalism had little to do with religious differences. These admittedly could be adjusted. It was a political conflict between those who wanted a free, united and democratic India and certain reactionary and feudal elements who, under the guise of religion, wanted to preserve their special interests. Religion, as practised and exploited in this way by its votaries of different creeds, seemed to me a curse and a barrier to all progress, social and individual. Religion, which was supposed to encourage spirituality and brotherly feeling, became the

fountain head of hatred, narrowness and meanness, and the lowest materialism.

"The developments in the War situation posed new questions before the Congress Working Committee. Gandhiji wanted the Committee, to extend the principle of non-violence, to which had adhered in our struggle for freedom, to the functioning of a free State. A free India must rely on this principle to guard itself against external aggressional or internal disorder. This question did not arise for us at the time, but it occupied his own mind and he felt that the time had come for a clear enunciation. Every one of us was convinced that we must adhere to our policy of non-violence, as we had so far done, in our own struggle. The War in Europe had strengthened this conviction. But to commit the future State was another and a more difficult matter, and it was not easy to see how anyone moving on the plane of politics could do it.

But imperialism thinks otherwise and imagines that it can continue to function and to coerce people to do its will. Even when danger threatens, it is not prepared to get this very substantial help, if this involves a giving up of political and economic control over India. It does not care even for the tremendous moral prestige which could come to it, if it did the fight thing in India and the rest of the Empire.

Today, on August 8th, 1940 as I write this, the Viceroy has given us the British Government's reply. It is the old language of British imperialism and the content has changed in no way. The sands of time run out here in India, as in Europe and the world.

So many of my colleagues have gone back to prison, and I envy them somewhat. Perhaps it is easier to develop an organic sense of life in the solitude of confinement than in this world of war and politics, and fascism and imperialism."

Achyut Patwardhan and Aruna Asaf Ali wrote a lengthy note, entitled 'Guidance to August Movement' to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on 7 January 1946.

"We have read carefully the resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the subject of non-violence passed on 11-12-1945. We have pondered the implications of the same, in respect of the events of the past three years and analysed its emphasis governing present policy and its significance in relation to any future struggle, in which the Indian people may be involved. Your personal annotation of the same resolution

issued in a press statement, has also clarified the perspective in which these policies are outlined.

"Since the resolution records the Congress Working Committee's considered views upon the events and developments of the past three years, with some of which we have been vitally concerned along with other colleagues, it becomes necessary to define our position unequivocally and to bear our share of responsibility for our policies and activities during the period of your incarceration.

"The resolution states in the first paragraph that after the arrest of the principal Congressmen '...the unguided masses...acted almost spontaneously.' This is not completely accurate statement of facts. There were in Bombay over a dozen prominent workers from the various provinces who held responsible positions in the Congress organization, after your arrest. Amongst us were several colleagues whose allegiance to Gandhiji's creed of truth and non-violence cannot be questioned. We were responsible along with these other colleagues for setting up an organization to convey what we believed to be necessary directions to thousands of Congress workers and others who were still out of jail, and who were anxious to implement the resolution of the August 1942. We all recognised the urgent necessity of providing some guidance to vast forces that were being unleashed. Instructions, directives, appeals and proclamations and the day-to-day exhortations, (broadcast by the Congress Radio) were issued from time to time almost immediately after your arrest in the name of the A.I. Congress throughout this entire period. Our authority for assuming such responsibility was never questioned and we received the untainted support of large sections of our people. The spontaneous response of the people to the Congress call to act as free men is the greatest phenomenon of recent history. Yet once they had set their marching foot upon the path of revolt, they clamoured for effective and undaunted guidance. They asked to be organized to whatever degree the terror regime would allow. And their genius triumphed for a time, over all the machinations and force of the whitemen's *Raj*. With respect to dislocation secrecy and intensive forms of social boycott and other attacks upon authority many specific instructions were issued. By and large such advice was widely accepted.

"With regard to non-violence, Congress policy has been mainly pragmatic. From time to time it has defined its scope within limits of practicality. The Working Committee has refused to follow in the past the strict logic of Gandhian non-violence. There are its resolutions on

record to prove this opinion. We have been ourselves profoundly influenced by the social values of Gandhiji's philosophy, but our acceptance of these values is essentially pragmatic and electic. The recognition that we light an unjust system rather than merely the personnel who administer it in the essence of our stress upon non-killing. Respect for life and private property are also logical corollaries of the same. These values were stressed in all our directions issued under the Congress seal. Conditions of unprovoked military and police aggression, however, create situations which are by no means easy to cope with. The resister has often only two alternatives. To resist, with all his might in whatever manner seems practicable or to submit. Under the severest tests the Congress name was never tarnished by the counsel of submission. We took our cue from the Working Committee's resolution of July 1942....'that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious...to build resistance to any aggression on India by the Japanese or any foreign dower.' We also took note of Gandhiji's well-known observations upon Polish resistance. The offer of armed support to Britain under certain conditions was fresh in our minds. Again, the agreement in principle, after your release to join the Executive Council of the Viceroy when all that remained of the war was the reconquest of Burma and Indonesia, did not suggest that our approach was contrary to Congress policy. Otherwise it would lead us to the fantastic conclusion that certain specific acts are only permitted in aliance with the British but those same acts became heresy when employed against it. It is, however, quite possible that under specific circumstances even on pragmatic grounds, there would be room for honest differences. All that we have expressed heretofore relates only to the events during your forced detention.

Insofar as the resolution in question faces us with your considered judgement we feel called upon to assume such responsibility as inescapably devolves upon us. This is not intended to minimise the undoubted fact of vast elemental forces spontaneously released. All the same we deliberately provided a few grains of organizational direction to the thousands to tons of mass initiative for the lack of which this unrehearsed upsurge would have collapsed in a matter of weeks rather than months.

The Congress had proclaimed its resolve to launch a mass struggle on the widest possible scale on non-violent lines. Every Indian who

desires freedom and strives for it, was to be 'his own guide, urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place'. But it is obvious that initiative and organization cannot be provided by each one for himself. A set of Congressmen and women sought to fulfil this obvious gap.

You have, however, deliberately ignored the fact that some of us have made a determined effort to provide direction and guidance in your absence. Further, you are definite that the forms of resistance improvised were inconsistent with the Congress policy of non-violence. This leaves us two loopholes we can attribute all that happened to the spontaneous urge of a people's revolt of which we were an insignificant anonymous focus and treat your judgment as a post factum advice for the guidance of future conduct. We may in the alternative disown our share and accept your judgment in silence. Honest conviction, however, prevents us from seeking this easier path. We were repeatedly warned that our activities might be disowned and our interpretation of the legitimate course of mass action repudiated. Nevertheless. We persisted in putting our faith upon one pragmatic test, whatever is calculated to sustain and effectively express the maximum potential resistance. We feel an inner compulsion to reassert our conviction and stand by it and accept the consequences of such a step.

"We did not impose any dogmatic rigtual of conduct upon our people. On the other hand, we studied their spontaneous improvisations with such power of discrimination as we possess and strove to inform the widely separated storm-centres of revolt with the experience and lessons gathered from far-flung sectors of resistance. Our directions have led thousands to risk their lives. It would be cowardice if we did not assume our share for such guidance. We were not waging a private war upon the British system.

"We submit the Working Committee have done less than justice to their own good name for undaunted partisanship of freedom's cause by dismissing the momentous events of the past three years as a series of impulsive and heroic, albeit undirected, aberrations. We remain unconvinced of our error although we may recognise the average element of mistakes which persists in all organisational executive efforts.

"As for the immediate implications of the Working Committee's resolution it will lead to a totally fallacious postulate that a people's revolt hinges exclusively upon spontaneity. Those who call upon the

people to stake their lives, upon the moment of total revolt bear the self-chosen obligation to provide an unbreakable core of guidance through organization for the interchange of information and direction and for greater co-ordination of all the available resources of resistance. This is not less necessary and becomes even decisive when the pattern of resistance is essentially decentralised. The question, therefore, cannot be evaded, whatever, honest differences there may be regarding the technique of revolt.

"For sake of recognition we witness the depressing fact of outstanding organizational talent being diverted in a lopsided effort to convert it for revitalizing the instruments of resistance. Such a policy reflects an incapacity to comprehend the lessons that the past three years have burnt upon the understanding of the commonest unknown resister. The paradox of praising dead men as heroes while obliquely disapproving the efforts which they fearlessly undertook along with others, also defeats the linking up of enthusiasm of action. This particular form of rigidity has in the past alienated from the Congress many sturdy fighters. We, therefore, pleaded for a re-examination of these weighty issues more specifically.

"Grave as we consider the consequences of this resolution in respect of past events and present tasks, its implications with regard to the future course of our struggle for freedom are even more disturbing. The Congress, since its partial legalisation, has terminated the policy of non-cooperation while paradoxically, it has also reaffirmed its faith in non-violence. The reversal of the policy of non-cooperation with Imperialist War in one province even before the formal legislation of the Congress as was not disapproved. Again, those who left the Congress and sought to break the moral of the people and joined with the forces of disruption during these years of travail are being received back into the fold without demur.

"The prevailing note of Congress policy according to this resolution is the Gandhian constructive programme. The parliamentary programme is supposed to be subservient to these activities. Dare we, however, look at facts as they are, we will have to confess that it is the parliamentary tail that is today wagging the Congress. Ere long it may drag us unwittingly upon the path of appeasement of Jinnah and collaboration with Imperialism as a lesser evil.

"The Congress is rolling upon a tidal wave of popular enthusiasm. There is no corresponding effort to revitalise the extensive network of extra-parliamentary organization before an atmosphere of subservience to the ministers sets in. The election manifesto outlines no precise plans for dealing with the complex problems of public administration,neither have you sought from the people a clear mandate to combat and reject unconditionally any scheme for constitution-making which does not endow that body with the core and substance, of full sovereignty. The basic trend of present policy is the possibility to negotiate an agreed method of transfer of full sovereignty to the India people after the elections. If this well-meant effort fails, the Indian people will once more have to gratitude towards another mass struggle. The election campaign has, therefore, to serve as a prelude to that end. What are our own weapons for such trail of strength? Up to now even when it was unsuccessful *satyagraha* has paid dividends in the form of election victories. Instead of anchoring us more firmly to the spirit of non-co-operation it has tended increasingly to succumb to the prevailing constitutionalist mentality.

When Legislature fail to provide the velvet path of negotiations, when constructive work remains hollowed as an oft-repeated good intention, when struggles begin with leading organiser voluntarily terminating their resistance by the symbolic ritual of goal-going, the Congress may once again face a grave crisis for which it is deliberately refusing to prepare.

"These questions fill us with grave disquiet. The British Government has sought to distort the balance of forces in the Congress by keeping in prison all such persons whose voice would be raised to challenge this growing need of collaboration. The Congress has uttered no effective protest against this calculated perversion of the voice of Indian nationalism. This resolution on the other hand provides a spacious excuse to Bureaucracy for prolonging all manner of restrictions on the liberties of these Congressmen whose pattern of activities stems from different set of political values.

"The Congress has more than once sought the freedom to interpret the general policy of non-violence in a form not acceptable to Gandhiji. On the 27th July, 1940 at the AICC proceedings at Poona the Congress President threw a revealing light on these matters. Indian National Congress is a political organization pledged to win political

independence of the country. It is not an institution for organising world peace. Honestly we cannot go so far as Mahatma Gandhi wants us to go. Most of us felt that we were not able to take up the grave responsibility of declaring that we would complete eschew violence when we have to deal with widespread internal disorder in this country or external aggression.

"In view of a succession of deliberate deviations from the straight and narrow path of non-violence, some of which were initiated by Mahatma Gandhi himself, (ref. the Gelder statement dated July 12, 1944) it seems that little difficult for us to appreciate the relevance of this one-sided stress upon the implications of non-violence in the context of a total struggle. We wish to make it plain that there is no influential section of political workers who advocate terrorism. The country in its upsurge of enthusisam today recognises the crying need for recognising available forces without which any heroic resistance would be nine days wonder. It is this organization that is grievously neglected in the dust of election mock fights. We hope the threats uttered by the Secretary of State and repeated by the Viceroy and some Governors about closing the door of peaceful negotiations have not indirectly evoked the gesture of good behaviour. We only hope our fears are without foundation.

"Many of those who participated in the last great struggle are still unable to make themselves heard. We fail to comprehend the propriety of this summary judgment upon the complete events of the past three years without even securing for all view-points the same measure of freedom of expression. We on our part would not question your right to judge us as disciplined soldiers of the Congress. Your solution constitutes such a judgement by implication. We request you to re-examine the issue more specifically and formulate specific charges and provide us with facilities for appearing before a duly constituted tribunal to vindicate our stand. We would normally be most reluctant to force ourselves upon your notice. But this resolution is bound to be interpreted as a reflection upon our alleged lapse from the path of duty to the struggle for freedom. Since we have no sense of wrong doing what we demand most earnestly is not merely the vindication of our self-respect but also the respect that our point of view deserves in the ranks of the Congress. The caprice of Imperialism withholds from us what civil liberty you enjoy. You will appreciate our request to secure for this explanation the same publicity that you have given to your own judgement of our politics and actions."

Your sincerely,
Achyut Patwardhan
Aruna Asaf Ali

Tej Bahadur Sapru commented on the refusal of the British statesment to release Gandhi in the hour of crisis and their failure to do the right thing in the Leaders' Conference in the following terms:

"Mahatma Gandhi has been called a rebel, but," said Tej Bahadur Sapru, "there was a rebel called Smutts who is rendering the greatest possible service to the Empire. There was another rebel De Valera, whom the British Government wanted to remain in the Empire."

"I believe," Tej Bahadur Sapru declared, "that the lesson which is reinforced by the British history with that the British Government has always settled with rebels rather than loyalists. I am not downhearted when Mahatma Gandhi is put down by the Home Member as a rebel. I still live in the hope that there will be a settlement with these rebels and when it takes place men like you and me will be ignored."

Taking the audience back to the terms of the Irish Treaty Tej Bahadur referred to the opinion recorded by Churchill suggesting that "Lloyd George erred in applying tremendous onslaughts without making the fairest offer.

"The time had come when the British Government remembering their history and tradition and remembering also the change in the situation and irrepressible urge for freedom in this country should win over the rebels."

Tej Bahadur Sapru also said, "Here is a man whose appeal to the imagination of the country is beyond doubt, who is going to end his life. It is open to you to criticise it but you cannot alter the fact, and if it should materialise, and if unfortunately he should die within the next 24 or 48 hours, I tell you that the task of reconciliation between the British and Hindus, I should like to say India Nation, would become extremely difficult. The task of reconciliation not only between Hindus and Muslims, but between the different nations of the country will become next to impossible.

"I have read the correspondence and the only interpretation I can place is that so far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned, his adherence to the doctrine of non-violence is as great as it ever was.

"It was plain after the Cripps failure and the Allahabad meeting of the AICC that the situation was deteriorating. If the Congress and the Mahatma were to be held responsible for the situation, no less were the Government responsible.

"We make on this occasion an appeal to the civilised conscience of Great Britain and the United Nations and we do say that if it is intended that, this country should settle down to constructive work, then it is absolutely necessary that Mahatma Gandhi should be released."

A very large gathering of representative men belonging to different communities, Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsis, Sikhs and British met at Delhi on Friday, the 19th February, to give expressions to the feelings in the country that Mahatma Gandhi should be enabled to end his fast. In the absence of Tej Bahadur Sapru on the first day of the conference, the proceedings were opened by Rajagopalachari in a short speech during which among other things he said. "Reports about Gandhiji's health are none to good." About the speech the meeting set up a committee to draft a resolution to be placed before the conference. The drafting committee adopted a resolution urging the release of Mahatma Gandhi, and in view of the urgency of situation, forwarded it immediately to His Excellency the Viceroy of India. The resolution runs as under:

"This conference representing different creeds communities and interests in India gives expression to the universal desire of the people of the country that the interest of the future of India and international goodwill, Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally. This conference views with the greatest concern the serious situation that will arise if the government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. This conference, therefore, urges the government to release Mahatma Gandhi forthwith."

The Committee of the Indian Congressmen in Great Britain sent a cable to President Roosevelt, Stalin and Chiang Kai Shek urging them to intervene in the matter of Mahatma Gandhi's fast. "We urge you as strongly to intervene in Gandhi's fast crisis. We submit that on the principle of the government and with the consent of the governed, the Indian problem can be immediately solved by handing over political power to the Indian Congress."

J.J. Singh, the president of the India League of America sent a message to President Roosevelt and General Chiang Kai Shek and

stated, "I am profoundly disturbed by the possibility of Gandhi's death." he also requested them to intervene in the matter and release Mahatma Gandhi in order to prevent any kind of catastrophe.

The prominent non-party leaders like Tej Bahadur Sapru, M.R. Jayakar, Sachidananda Sinha, Chunilal B. Mehta, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth and Kanwar Jagdish Parshad made an attempt to end the deadlock between the government and the Congress leaders. They put forward the plea that the charges levelled against Gandhi and other leaders might be referred to an impartial tribunal, and in case this suggestion was not agreeable to the Government, Gandhi and his associates might be released to enable them to consult other parties in regard to the prevailing political situation in the country. The lengthy statement, as it was, it elaborated a number of controversial issues.

"His Excellency the Viceroy's recent refusal to permit any non-Congress leaders to interview Mahatma Gandhi and the speeches of Mr. Amery in the House of Commons can be reasonably interpreted as indicating that the British Government are resolved to keep Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent leaders of the Congress in detention without trial for the duration of the war. Even more significant is the denial to Mr. Phillips, the personal representative of President Roosevelt, of an opportunity to that the Congress should have passed the resolution which it did pass on the 8th of August, 1942 at Bombay. We have also condemned the acts of violence and sabotage which took place a few months ago in this country. We wish to place beyond all doubts that we seek for no concessions for Mahatma Gandhi and the chief associates. Our demand is for justice and no more and no less. Grave charges have been publicly made against Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues and it has been suggested, both in England and in India, that the Congress leaders were pro-Japanese. To the best of our knowledge and belief there is no truth in this allegation. Mahatma Gandhi's pacifism, known all over the world, should not, in our opinion, be interpreted as amounting to his sympathy with Japan or with any of the Axis power.

"The charges brought against Mahatma Gandhi are to be found in the published correspondence between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi, in Government communiques and pamphlets and in the pronouncements of the Secretary of State for India. It is somewhat remarkable that these charges have been made at a time when those who could meet them had no opportunity of rebutting them. It has been

said that nothing was easier for Mahatma Gandhi than to repuuiate acts of violence and acts of sabotage and to withdraw civil disobedience.

"We feel that he has already repudiated the acts of violence and it is our conviction that so far as he is concerned, his adherence to the doctrine of non-violence is as strong today as it ever was. For ourselves we do not believe in civil disobedience, either on principle of as matter of expediency, but we are constrained to observe that matters were allowed to drift after the failure of the Cripps-Mission and no attempt was made to avert a crisis by the exercise of imagination and constructive statesmanship.

Taking the situation as it is we urge that the *ipse dixit* of the executive government should not be regarded as sufficient to justify the prolonged detention of imprisoned leaders without impartial investigation. Let those *exparte* accusations be investigated by a tribunal of unchallengable status and impartiality—a tribunal so constituted as to satisfy all reasonable men that it will carry on its investigation without fear or favour, and that its decisions will in no the highest interests of the government itself. Madame Chiang Kai Shek has recently stated in a public speech in America that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should be set at liberty and that speech was made after the charges against him has been broadcast to the world. Can his continued detention be justified before world opinion if he is denied every opportunity of defending himself.

"If the objection to our demand is that such an investigation into the charges against Mahatma Gandhi and his coworkers is not feasible during the war, we should like to pointout that in his letter to Mahatma Gandhi dated February 5, 1943. His Excellency the Viceroy said: 'if we do not act on all this information of make it publicly known, it is because the time is not yet ripe, but you may rest assured that the charges against Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world it you can.' To this Mahatma Gandhi replied in his letter dated February 7, 1943: You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable? It is clear, therefore, that so far back as the 5th of February, 1943, the possibility of these leaders having to clear themselves before

the world was considered and maintained by His Excellency the Viceroy himself. We cannot see, therefore, any valid reason why that possibility should not be translated into a fact at this stage. To the objection that the setting up of a tribunal will lead to public excitement, our reply is that the continued detention of these leaders had already caused and is causing grave dissatisfaction and keen sense of justice in the public mind. If Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues are not allowed to meet the charges against them until after the war and are to be kept in prison till then, the plain implication of this is that some of the most prominent Indian leaders will be kept in jail without trial for may be five years and some of them may even die during this long interval. Amery's tauntingly provocative description of such detention as 'innocuous isolation' has only increased public resentment. Government may think that they are strong enough to ignore all such feelings and that they are the sole judges as to when and whom to arrest and detain without trial for an unlimited period. Whatever, may be said of such action on the part of a government of the people, the same cannot apply to a government carried on by an irremovable executive, irresponsible to the people of this country or to its legislature and in which the key positions are still in British hands. Whatever the legal position, the Government of India must, in the circumstances, seek a moral basis for its actions and it is with that object in view that we suggest an investigation by an impartial tribunal.

"We should, in conclusion, like to point out that the Defence of India Rule, under which Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues were arrested, was pronounced last month by the Federal Court in an authoritative decision to be invalid. Instead of availing themselves of the opportunity to restore those men to freedom under the sanction of a decision by the highest judicial authority in India, we regret that the Government of India have, tried to legalise their action by a validating ordinance. No well-wisher of the country can contemplate without grave concern a continuance of the present state of things which forebodes ill for the mutual relations between India and Britain. The sense of frustration is now deeper if less vociferous. We sincerely hope that our suggestion that the imprisoned leaders may be given a chance of clearing themselves may be accepted. If government for any reason are not prepared to set up an impartial tribunal, then justice on less than expediency, demand that Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues should be set at liberty so that they may apply themselves as free men, as we

expect that they will, to a review of the situation and to the solution of the present deadlock in consultation and cooperation with other important parties."

To this statement of the leaders Amery made a reply in the house of Commons. He stated that the Government of India have on intention of staging a trial of Gandhi and other detained Congress leaders.

The arrests of leaders of the Congress was a clear indication for the outbreak of an 'open rebellion' against the *Raj* almost in every nook and corner of the country. The arrests of their leaders like Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru greatly agitated their minds, and the retaliation in various forms erupted spontaneously. As soon as the news reached cities and towns, there were strikes and bandhs, and these strikes varied from place to place. At prominent commercial towns like Ahmedabad, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Kanpur, and Amritsar, the strikes were observed from one week to two weeks. There was thus an expression of so much excitement and sympathy that it appeared a complete and unflinching identification of the common people with the cause Congress had taken up. This kind of identification was to be shown at any kind of sacrifice—both physical and financial suffering.

Another prominent feature of showing resentment, anger and dissatisfaction against the *Raj* was holding large scale demonstrations and taking out processions with placards inscribed in patriotic language. The response of the people in terms of their attendance of mass meetings was immense. People of all professions thronged in thousands to join the mass rallies and meetings. The participation by students in these processions and meetings was a remarkable phenomenon in this regard. Schools and colleges were closed and students organised mass demonstrations with patriotic zeal. As a result of these activities, numerous students suffered immensely in terms of loss in their educational career.

The zeal and enthusiasm shown by the industrial workers was unparalleled in the annals of our country. They struck work and came out of their mills and factories *en masse* in Bombay, Ahmedabad. Madras, Delhi, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Nagpur and other towns. They organised mass meetings, arranged demonstrations and educated their brethren about the fundamentals of independence.

The crowds of people carried national flags and shouted national slogans in cities and towns. Their purpose was to hoist these flags at

numerous places and government buildings. Many of them succeeded in hoisting national flags on the building of schools, colleges, municipal boards, district courts and government secretariats. The task indeed was risky, but the challenge the *satyagrahis* posed to the *Raj* was full of complexities which created difficulties for the police to control and maintain law and order.

The Quit India movement clearly reflected the mood of the nation and clarified the fact that the awakening amongst them for a common cause, *i.e.,* to free India from the bondage of the *Raj* was a reality and its practicability with mass action in all the regions of the country.

It indeed was a serious challenge to the *Raj* which had deep repercussions on the functioning of the administration. Although well-entrenched on the soil of India, it gave it the realisation of the fact that it was, at this point of time was somewhat difficult to ignore a great spontaneous national upsurge which was found to be uncontrolled on account of a huge mass support. This kind of mass support to a common political aim, *i.e.,* to attain independence had nightmarish effect on the day-to-day functioning of the machinery of the Government in India and this fact was seriously realised by the viceroy and the Home Government in England. Under these circumstances, "The British, moreover, were moved by the challenge to strengthen their rule, responding with renewed determination to remove the conditions which made the rising possible."[21]

The demands on both sides—by the Congress and the *Raj*—were indeed very clear. At this point of time, the leadership of the Congress showed willingness to the cause of the Allies if its demand of India's independence was conceded without any kind of pre-condition. On the other hand, the global commitments of the *Raj* had tightened its hands that it simply showed willingness to enlarge its area of responsible Government in India but any kind of demand for independence was to be taken up after the war was over. These conflicting political gestures did not satisfy the aspirations of the national leaders.

The courting of arrests and acceptance of convictions for a few years were the common phenomenon amongst the *satyagrahis.* They bore all kinds of repressions by police with a sense of sacrifice for the country and its people. The economic and physical losses were immense: casualties—fatal and non-fatal, defections from police and other government departments, imposition of collective fines, sufferings

caused to women and children and firing from air were the glaring phenomenon during the movement.

The damage to government property was immense. The government buildings, police stations, municipal schools, hospitals, and private buildings were severely damaged. The cases of bomb explosions were also noticeable in various regions. Special courts were set up to deal with criminal cases. Some cases were dealt with by military courts. The government records stated that 23,358 persons were convicted by ordinary courts, 313 by military courts and 41 death sentences were confirmed out of 67 persons who sentenced to death.[22]

The reception of the people accorded to the Congress *satyagrahis* was unprecedented. They were considered heroes of all sections of people. Besides the trials of Indian officers and the naval mutiny of February 1946 had greatly engendered sympathy in the hearts of the people regarding the unchallenged and unquestionable patriotic zeal of young personnel of the army and the navy. In press and public meetings, they were greeted with affection thus creating an example for others to emulate.

The Congress propaganda with the media of cyclostyled literature was a potent device among the masses of India. These machines operated by small and big shopkeepers proved instrumental in disseminating hand-bill and sheets which came secretly in hands of numerous *satyagrahis.* This kind of style was a glaring phenomenon in cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Lahore, Patna, Allahabad and elsewhere. Such presses were actively hunted by the police and put under lock and key. The continuous searches of houses led to the arrests and convictions of numerous inmates. Thus official efforts were made to stop all possible sources of publicity and propaganda.

The nationalist press was an eye-sore for the *Raj*. It was brought under strict government regulations. The prominent newspapers which stooped publications as a result of government's restrictions on them were the *Amrita Bazar Patrika, Hindustan Standard, Hindustan Times, Basumati, Jugantar, Matribhoomi, Telegraph, Lokmanya, Jagriti, Daily Krishik, Bharat, Andhra Times, Dinamani, Hindustan* and others.[23] Devdas Gandhi, editor of the *Hindustan Times* was arrested for breach of the order of the government that not more than three columns be devoted to news about the national movement.

The part played by the *Praja Mandal* in States like Hyderabad. Mysore, Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Travancore and Udaipur afforded much support to the movement. They informed the rulers to realise the fact that the time was fast changing and they must value the sentiments and political demands of the people of their states. In some smaller states, people were in total rebellion. In some states, the rulers were reluctant to adopt repressive measures against *satyagrahis* but the British Residents stationed in their states did not approve of their policy, and they recommended repressive measures against the *satyagrahis*. As a result of this policy, firing, suspension and dismissals from services. Prominent leaders along with numerous volunteers and *satyagrahis* were put behind the bars under inhuman conditions.

This kind of repression, however, did not exhaust their zeal and enthusiasm. They moved from village to village to spread the message of Congress by issuing hand-bills, posters and news bulletins for wider circulation in towns and villages. This mode of publicity was a counter-move to the censor on news imposed by the order of the government.

The part played by the industrial labourers is no less in this movement. They did not demand any kind of increase in their emoluments, but their strikes were totally political in contents. So far so, at some places, the machinery halted causing a great loss to its productive capacity and affecting the war-efforts of the government. The cooperation of the industrial labour was thus on a large scale compared to the Civil Disobedience Movement. In fact the industrial labour showed a high sense of suffering and sacrifice for the cause of country's freedom.

The prominent political parties like Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, the Communists and the Akalis and the pressure groups having linkage with princes, depressed classes, Europeans in India, women organizations, the khaksars and others reacted in accordance with the ideology of their organisation. In this regard, Muslim League reacted at once and called a meeting of its Working Committee which had its sessions from 16-20 August 1942. It passed a long resolution deploring the action of the Indian National Congress by lunching the Quit India Movement. "The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League...deplores...the decision of the A.I.C.C. to launch 'open rebellion' by resorting to a mass civil disobedience movement in pursuance of their objective of establishing Congress Hindu Domination which has resulted in lawlessness and considerable destruction of life and property...."

"The movement is directed not only to coerce the British Government into handing over power to a Hindu oligarchy, thus disabling themselves, from carrying out their moral obligations and pledges given to Mussalmans and other sections of the people of India from time to time, but also to force Mussalmans, to submit and surrender to Congress terms and dictation. Ever since the beginning of the war, and even prior to that, the sole object of the Congress policy has been either to cajole or coerce the British Government into surrendering power to Congress—a Hindu body with a microscopic following of other communities—in utter suppression of 10,00,00,000 Mussalmans, besides millions of other peoples in this vast sub-continent of India. While claiming the right of self-determination for 'India' which is a mere Congress euphemism for 'The Hindu majority,' it has persistently opposed the right of self-determination for the Muslim nation to decide and determine its own destiny."

"In May, 1942, the A.I.C.C. in a resolution emphatically repudiated the Muslim League's demand for the right of self-determination for Muslims, and thus closed the door for a settlement of the communal problem, which is condition precedent to the attainment of freedom and independence by India. Congress has also recognised this as an indispensable condition and has, therefore, made it a prominent plank in the Congress programme for over 20 years, but by their recent decisions, they have suddenly thrown it overboard, and instead have substituted a fantastic theory, that a solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem can only follow withdrawal of the British power from India (The negotiations of Sir Stafford Cripps with Congress broke down, not on the issue of independence, but because of the refusal of the British Government to hand over the Muslims and minorities to the tender mercies of Congress....)"

The Working Committee resolution also made it clear that the League was willing to consider proposals for setting up a provisional Government on the basis of equality. It asked the Muslims to keep aloof from the movement and appealed to the British Government to accede to the demand of Pakistan. This becomes clear from the following point of view of the Muslim League.

"The Muslim League has been, and is, ready to consider any proposals and negotiate with any party on a footing of equality for setting up a provisional Government of India in order to mobilize the resources of the country for the purpose of the provided the demands of Muslim

India are conceded unequivocally....The committee calls on Mussalmans to abstain from any participation in the movement initiated by the Congress and to continue to pursue their own normal peaceful life. The Committee hopes that no attempt will be made from any quarter to intimidate, coerce, or molest or interfere in any manner with the normal life of the Moslems, otherwise Moslems will be compelled to offer resistance and adopt all such measures as maybe necessary for the protection of their life, honour and poverty...the Committee believes that if the Moslem masses are to be roused to intensify the war effort with all the sacrifices involved it is only possible provided they are assured that it will lead to the realisation of Pakistan. The Muslim League, therefore, calls on the British Government to come forward without further delay and with an unequivocal declaration guaranteeing to Mussalmans the right of self-determination and pledge themselves to abide by the verdict of a plebiscite of Mussalmans and give effect to the Pakistan scheme in consonance with the basic principles laid down by the Lahore resolution of the League passed in March 1940."[24]

The mobs of people showed their resentment by attacking police stations, post offices and all means of communications to dislocate the district authorities and wire-cutting and pulling down polls were the common features of mob fury. Thus for three days, the district administrative machinery was completely paralysed. The wearers of Gandhi caps were hunted out at various place and they fell prey to indiscriminate firing. So far so, the police used excessive powers to arrest anybody found on the road-side, beat him and deprived him of his personal belongings.

In some areas policemen were greatly effected by the movement. They refused to open fire on the people. In such cases, British sergeants were commissioned to do the job, but they were too few to suppress the movement which had engulfed the larger areas. The new recruits failed to cope with the situation which had taken a serious turn. Their *lathi*-charges, plundering and other kinds of barbarities did not prove effective to curb the movement from its roots.

The participation of students in the movement was a glaring phenomenon. Then came out of their institutions—both schools and colleges, in a large number. The situation became worse when many of them offered themselves for arrests and convictions. The government, however, dealt with them very severely. It sought help of heads of institutions and press in sending them warning of a grave nature. The

strikes, however, continued up to 1st September. A few hundreds of them were rusticated and many, of them were debarred from appearing for their examination for at least one year. They, however, did not lost fervour for the movement as some of them did not prefer to go back to their institutions. Instead they remained in jails along with other political leaders for a long time. By this kind of political style, the *Raj* did sense the height of excitement in the hearts of the youths of India engendered by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders.

The Congress members of the Municipal Corporation, Bombay adopted a novel method of showing their patriotic fervour for the movement. Some of the front-rank leaders, of course, did not lag behind in courting arrest, while others began to show anti-*Raj* stance by their constitutional activities while participation, in a typical way, in the proceedings of the Corporation. And this method was to create deadlock in the proceedings by denying a proper quorum concerning important matters of the Corporation. The regular abstention proved irksome in numerous matters concerned with the government or public utility services. As a result of this style, as many as sixteen Congress Councillors lost their seats. The crisis reached its climax when the same ex-members contested on party tickets and were returned by a thumping majority against candidates of prominent parties like Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha.

During the movement, the government undertook stringent measures which virtually crushed the civil liberties of the people in various regions. Some of the prominent legal experts like M.C. Setalvad,[25] Jahangirdhar[26] and Chimanlal C. Shah[27] resigned from their positions as a protest against the repressive policy of the government.

There were some cases of bomb explosions, and setting fire to paper godown of the *Times of India* as well as the Mazagaon Police area. Their other acts of violence were not within the political programme of the Indian National Congress. The secret activities of certain elements made the police to *lathi*-charge and thus made them ineffective in further escalating their activities. This kind of programme, however, damaged the cause of the movement as the basic tenets of non-violent principles were not adhered to, rather they were violated in a ruthless way.

The calculated design of the people was to bring about the maximum physical damage to the smooth functioning of the machinery of the government. To achieve this aim, mass sabotage was practised

by their intense marches from one village to the other, coupled with the anti-*Raj* propaganda, removal of rails and fish-plates, derailment of goods trains, raids on police stations, destruction of Railway Stations, government godowns, post offices, damages to roads, bridges and even aerodromes. They thus resorted to all such activities as were to weaken the position of government.

Jawaharlal Nehru observed, "It was extraordinary, how British authority ceased to function over many areas, both rural and urban, and it took many days and sometimes weeks for a 'reconquest,' as it was often termed. This happened particularly in Bihar, in the Midnapur District of Bengal and in the south-eastern districts of the United Provinces." Independent peoples' governments were established in North-Bhagalpur, Ballia and other places. Generally speaking, these governments did not last for more than a few days on account of severe police and army action by the government.

The Congress movement had much effect on the smooth functioning of the administrative machinery of the Government of India as well as provincial governments. It removed the illusion of the British *Raj* that its empire was morally justified, that the majority of the people in India were loyal, and, by any chance, desired the continuation of British rule.

"While 1942 clearly surpassed all previous Congress-led movements in its level of anti-British militancy, the very extent of anti-foreign sentiments, as in 1857, possibly reduced internal class tensions and social radicalism....Attempts by underground leaders to revive the movement through improved technical methods alone could not ultimately change the situation. It is interesting that, as we shall see, 'national government' proved most long-lived in areas in Tamluk or Satara where local circumstances seem to have forced somewhat more concrete and radical social economic policies on the militants."[28]

"The failure of Cripps Mission created for Gandhiji a moral crisis of a higher order. For him the World War was a moral conflict—a struggle between freedom and democracy represented by one side, and bondage and dictatorship by the other. He looked upon to British on the whole as a freedom-loving people whose conscience was not altogether impervious to appeals to higher values. Cripps sheltered this appraisal and falsified his expectations. On the other hand, the Indian people were filled with distrust and hostility towards the British."[29]

"Gandhiji's mass civil disobedience movement knocked out these foundations. It was at last borne in upon the British that they were not wanted in India, and that their belief that any section of the India people—the Muslims the Depressed Classes or the States' people favoured the continuance of their rule, was a delusion."[30]

The retaliatory action by the police, army and bureaucracy in all the regions of India was proverbial in content. In the name of the maintenance of law and order, every canon of morality, decency and law was violated. The dispersal of mobs were at the point of rifle, pistol and machine-guns. The beating and flogging to political prisoners were combined will all types of insults unheard of. Even women were not spared.

"Women were stripped, assaulted, raped: even children were not spared. In the villages numerous houses were razed to the ground, many actually burnt. People were tied to trees and beaten, sometimes undressed and whipped. *Lathis,* short staves, fists and even shoes were used....One of the most effective form of punitive measures was the imposition of collective fines which were realized with the utmost rigour. The whole object obviously was to terrorize people, teach them a lesson and efface from their minds all thoughts of defiance."[31]

The revolt of 1942 ended in failure in so far as its immediate aim was concerned. This aim was the attainment of independence by forcing withdrawal of British rule and was sought to be achieved in a short period of time by paralysing the entire machinery of administration and thereafter seizing power. It is evident that the revolt was crushed within three months, and law and order was restored throughout the country after this short period.[32]

It is alleged that Gandhi knew that Congress and the country were not non-violent and that only a small minority believed in non-violence. He anticipated arrests and expected the movement to gain strength therefrom in the resentment of the people in fact, he expected the masses, in the call he made, to respond each man according to his light. "He though retaining his personal belief in non-violence, was forced to discard it when practical considerations arose. The urgency and the gravity of the situation left neither time nor place for non-violence as he had always conceived."

In contrast to the previous movements launched by Gandhi and his associates, this movement was made open to everybody in the country

without restriction of person or condition. It was indeed a mass movement with all that a mass movement implied. As such it was a "reflection of the desperation that had seized Gandhi—a desperation which found repeated mention—and the urgency which demanded a successful termination before a Japanese invasion." He stated in the *Harijan,* "I waited until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke."[33]

"But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait, I might have to wait till December. For the preparation that I have prayed for and worked for may never come and in the meantime I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks, which are evidently involved, I must ask the people to resist the slavery."[34]

REFERENCES

1. At Bhusaval, a goods train was derailed and its several wagons were smashed.
2. Even women political prisoners were severely *lathi*-charged.
3. Lal Padmadhar of Rewa died as a result of police firing and Kumari Shakuntala was severely injured.
4. The income-tax office was razed to the ground.
5. Villages like Sonabass and Bahuna were the worst sufferers as their houses were looted and burnt. Police extorted money from innocent persons of the villages.
6. The District Magistrate was the incharge of the whole operation.
7. The other place where the people acted effectively were Kaapa, Kalmeshwar, Khaparkheda and Bharatwada.
8. As many as nine mills were on strike in Indore.
9. Numerous village officers tendered their resignations.
10. *Linlithgow Papers*: Gandhi to Linlithgow, resignations.
11. *Ibid.*, Linlithgow to Gandhi, 22nd August 1942.
12. Gandhi to Secretary (Home), Government of India, 23rd September 1943.
13. *Linlithgow Papers*: Gandhi to Linlithgow, 31st December 1942.
14. *Ibid.*, Linlithgow to Gandhi, 13th January 1943.
15. *Ibid.*, Gandhi to Linlithgow, 19th January 1943.

16. *Ibid.*, Linlithgow to Gandhi, 25th January 1943.
17. *Ibid.*, Gandhi to Linlithgow, 29th January 1943.
18. *Ibid.*, Linlithgow to Gandhi, 5th February 1943.
19. *Ibid.*, Gandhi to Linlithgow, 7th February 1943.
20. Jawaharlal Nehru. *An Autobiography,* New Delhi, 1962, pp. 599ff. This note was written by him on 8 August 1940.
21. Francis G. Hutchins, *Spontaneous Revolution: The Quit India Movement,* Delhi, 1971, p. 341.
22. For details see Home Poll. File 3/52, 1943.
23. In all ninety-six newspapers closed down.
24. For details see Home Poll. File 3/101/42, 1942.
25. He was advocate-General.
26. He was Public Prosecutor.
27. He was Government Solicitor.
28. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885-1947,* Delhi, 1983, pp. 398-99.
29 Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India,* Vol. IV, 1983, p. 369.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 379-80.
32. Amba Prasad, *The Indian Revolt of 1942,* Delhi, 1958, p. 118.
33. *Harijan,* 28 May 1942.
34. *Ibid.*

19

Resolutions Passed by the Congress Working Committee on 8th March, 1947 at New Delhi

I. Prime Minister Attlee's Declaration of February 20, 1947

1. The Working Committee welcome the declaration made on behalf of the British government of their definite intention to transfer power finally by a date not later than June 1948 and to take steps to that end in advance.

2. The transfer of power, in order to be smooth, should be preceded by the recognition in practice of the Interim Government a Dominion Government with effective control over the services and administration, and the Viceroy and Governor-General functioning as the constitutional head of government. The Central Government must necessarily function as a Cabinet with full authority and responsibility. Any other arrangement is incompatible with good government and is peculiarly dangerous during a transitional period full of political and economic crisis.

3. The Congress has already expressed its acceptance of the British Cabinet Mission's scheme of May 16th, 1946, and has further accepted the interpretations put upon it by the British Cabinet on December 6th, 1946. In accordance therewith, the Constituent Assembly has been functioning and has appointed various committees to carry on its work. It has become all the more essential now to expedite this work so that the constitution for an Indian Union and its constituent units should be finally prepared and given effect to well within the stated period to facilitate the final transfer of power.

4. The Working Committee welcome the decision of a number of States to join the Constituent Assembly and trust that all the states and

their peoples will be effectively represented in this task of making a constitution for an Indian Union. The Committee invite afresh the representatives of the Muslim League, who have been elected to the Constituent Assembly, to join in this historic undertaking.

5. The work of the Constituent Assembly is essentially voluntary. The Working Committee have frequently stated that there can or should be no compulsion in the making of a constitution for India. It is the fear of compulsion or coercion that has given rise to distrust and suspicion and conflict. If this fear goes, as it must it will be easy to determine India's future so as to safeguard the right of all communities and give equal opportunities to all. It has been made clear that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly will apply only to those areas which accept it. It must also be understood that any Province or part of a Province which accepts the constitution and desires to join the Union cannot be prevented from doing so. Thus, there must be no compulsion either way, and the people will themselves decide their future. This peaceful and cooperative method is the only way to make democratic decisions with the maximum of consent.

6. In this hour when final decisions have to be taken, and the future of India has to be shaped by Indian minds and hands, the Working Committee earnestly can upon all parties and groups, and all Indians generally, to discard violent and coercive methods, and cooperate peacefully and democratically in the making of a constitution. The time for decision has come and no one can stop it or stand by an remain unaffected. The end of an era is at hand and a new age will soon begin. Let this dawn of the new age be ushered in bravely, leaving hates and discords in the dead past.

II. Invitation to Muslim League to meet Representatives of Congress

In view of new developments which are leading to a swift transfer of power in India, it has become incumbent on the people of India to prepare themselves jointly and cooperatively for this change so that this may be effected peacefully and to the advantage of all. The Working Committee, therefore, invite the All India Muslim League to nominate representatives to meet representatives of the Congress in order to devise means to meet it.

The Working Committee will keep in close touch with the representative of the Sikh and other groups concerned, with a view to cooperating with them in the steps that may have to be taken and in safeguarding their interests.

III. Punjab

During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion. These attempts have failed, as all such attempts must fail, and have only led to greater violence and carnage.

The Punjab, which has thus far escaped this contagion, became six weeks ago the scene of an agitation, supported by some people in high authority, to coerce and break a popular Ministry which could not be attacked by constitutional methods. A measure of success attended this, and an attempt was made to form a Ministry dominated by the group that led the agitation. This was bitterly resented and has resulted in increased and widespread violence. There has been an orgy of murder and arson and Amritsar and Multan have been scenes of horror and devastation.

These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion. This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two Provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.

The Working Committee command this resolution, which should work to the advantage of all the communities concerned, and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other. The Committee earnestly appeal to the people of the Punjab to put an end to the killing and brutality that are going on and to face the tragic situation, determined to find a solution which does not involve compulsion of any major group and which will effectively remove the causes of friction.

20

Partition and Independence

The role of the Indian National Army (INA) under the stewardship of Subhas Chandra Bose for the freedom movement of our country is unique in the annals of history. After his resignation from the ICS, he devoted his life and energy for the causes having linkage with anti-*Raj* stance. He became the Congress President in 1938 and 1939. On account of differences with the Congress High Command, he resigned from the Congress and formed a new party known as the Forward Bloc.

In July 1940, Bose was arrested under the Defence of India Rules. But after a few months, the government released him on account of his ill-health. He was, however, interned in his house under police surveillance.. His disappearance from his residence on 26 January 1941 and reaching Berlin and later on Japan were events which enabled him to raise the Indian National Army with the help of Rash Behari Bose, who was made president of the Council of Action and Mohan Singh as the Commander-in-Chief.

The Japanese authorities promised all support to Netaji in order to fight against the British and expel them for India. When he visited Singapore he was handed over the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League by Rash Behari Bose.

Assuming full command of the Azad Hind Fauj, Bose was also instrumental in the formation of the Provisional Government of Free India. His famous battle cry was 'Chalo Delhi'. Many officers and soldiers of the Indian army joined under the command of Bose in order to liberate India. Assisted by the Japanese army, the INA forces marched towards India and reached Kohima where they hoisted their flag. But with the commencement of winter in 1944-45, the counter-offensive by the British led to the defeat of the Japanese. With this defeat, the plans made by the INA collapsed. Soon after, it was reported that Bose lost his life in an air crash.

The selfless devotion to the cause of independence of India shown by Bose and his associates created much stir when some of the officers of the INA, *i.e.,* Sehgal, Dhillon and Shah Nawaz were tried by the court-martial in the Red Fort. The Congress leaders took up their cause and Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai and other pleaded their case. They were ultimately set free, and were accorded welcome befitting national heroes.

The general elections in England were held on 25 July 1945, electorate gave to the Labour Party a landslide victory, 393 Labour candidates won against 213 of the Conservative Party and their allies, 19 of the other parties and 14 Independents. Attlee was elected as the Prime Minister. Soon after the Labour Party's assumption of office, the Americans dropped atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6th and 9th August and all Japanese resistance creased. On 15 August the Victory Day was celebrated by the Allies.

On 20 February 1946, Attlee made a statement in the House of Commons. "His Majesty's Government desire to hand over their responsibility to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in India....His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power to responsible India hands by a date not later than June 1948...His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date..."

The reaction of Gandhiji to the statement of Attlee was favourable. He observed in unequivocal terms that whatever might have been the history of British rule in the past, there was not a shadow of doubt that the British were going to quit India in the near future. Nehru at once wrote to Mahatma Gandhi, "...I am convinced that it is in the final analysis a brave and definite statement. It meets our oft-repeated demand for quitting India."

The elections had cleared the way for the subsequent steps towards the formulation of the new constitution. On 1st January 1946, Pethick-Lawrence conveyed the desire of the British Government "to see India rise quickly to the full and free status of an equal partner in the British Commonwealth." He also announced in the Parliament on 19 January 1946, the steps which government intended to take in conjunction with the leader of Indian opinion for the early realisation of full self-government in India.

These steps were (1) to hold preparatory discussions with elected representatives of British India and with indian States in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution; (2) to set up a constitution-making body; and (3) to establish full self-government in India.

He also announced that a special Mission of Cabinet Ministers consisting of the Secretary of State, the President of the Board of Trade (Stafford Cripps) and the First Lord of Admiralty (A.V. Alexander) would go to India to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter.

On 23 March, the Cabinet Mission arrived in India. Pethick-Lawrence stated at a press interview that their primary object was to set up machinery whereby full independent status of India would be determined by Indians, and secondly, to make interim arrangements.

The Mission spent nearly five weeks in discussion with the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, provincial Governors, party leaders, representatives of princely states and prominent individuals. The Congress point of view was presented by its President, Abul Kalam Azad. Its basic demand was for independence to be embodied in a constitution comprehending the whole of India and made by a Constituent Assembly. But for the intervening period it was necessary to set up a provincial government which would be responsible for arranging the various states from the formation of the constituent assembly onwards.

During his interview with the members of the Mission, Gandhiji considered the two-nation theory a falsehood which he was not prepared to accept. Regarding the interim government, his suggestion was that Jinnah should be asked to form the government of his own choice, but if he refused then the Congress should be given the chance to form the government.

On the other hand, M.A. Jinnah took a different stand and repeated his theory before the Mission that Hindus and Muslims could not be considered one nation. Only the British had imposed unity on India, but that unity was purely external in reality India was many, not one. He further opined that after the withdrawal of the British there would be no power which could maintain the unity. He forcefully pleaded that it was essential to divide India and transfer power to two sovereign and independent states.

The Liberal leaders were against the division of India. The Sikh leaders were in favour of a united India. The Hindu Mahasabha insisted upon immediate transfer of power and the integrity and individuality of the country. The two factions of the Scheduled Castes asked for guarantees of human rights and safeguards for their interests.

The main proposals of the Mission were as follows:

(a) There should be Union of India dealing with three subjects, *i.e.,* Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications, having the necessary powers to raise the finances required for these subjects.

(b) The Union should have an Executive and a Legislature of representatives chosen from British India and the States.

(c) Provinces should be free to form groups (sub-federation) with Executives and Legislatures, and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.

(d) The Constitution of the Union of the groups should provide for a reconsideration of the terms of the Constitution after an initial period of ten years.

The Congress was unhappy about the scheme of the Mission and it rejected the idea of sub-federation. The Muslim League was also dissatisfied with the findings of the Mission. Jinnah regretted that the demand of Muslim League for Pakistan was rejected by the members of the Mission.

The 16th of August was declared as the 'Direct Action Day' by the Muslim League. In fact it was the day of protests and meetings to propagate the Muslim demand, to explain the Muslim attitude towards the Cabinet Mission's offer and to condemn the conduct of the Congress. In Calcutta the day began with public demonstrations, closing of shops and hoisting of Muslim League flags. Soon resistance led to clashes and rioting spread over the city. The mad fury continued for four days and then on 20th August the city began to return to normal life. The Government of Suhrawardy was criticized for its failure to take precautionary measures to avert conflicts, to protect life and property of the citizens and to maintain law and order. The number of persons killed was estimate at 5,000 killed and 15,000 injured. Besides there was huge loss of property.

On 22nd August 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru informed the Viceroy that although he was anxious to form a coalition with the Muslim

League. He wished to make it clear that coalition did not mean a submission to the demands of the Muslim League. He, in fact, wanted a strong government united in the pursuit of policies on which there was fundamental agreement. After two days, the new cabinet, with the following members, was formed. They were Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Asaf Ali, C. Rajagapalachari, Sarat Chandra Bose, John Mathai, Baldev Singh, Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Jagjiwan Ram, Ali Zaheer and C.H. Bhaba.

At this point of time, the Viceroy promised to give the new government the maximum freedom in the day-to-day functioning of the administrative machinery. He, however, regretted that, though five seats had been offered to the Muslim League, it showed no interest to join the coalition. Jinnah showed anger over the Viceroy's statement, but Nehru declared, "We are perfectly prepared to, and have accepted, the position of sitting in sections, which will consider the question of formation of groups....We seek agreed and integrated solutions with the largest measure of goodwill behind them."

The Muslim League, however, declared the 2nd of September as a day of mourning and Jinnah advised his followers to display black flags. Violence broke out at many places in Bengal, Bihar, Punjab and Bombay. The worried Mahatma remarked, "We are not yet in the midst of civil war, but we are nearing it."

Meanwhile mutual meetings and exchange of letters amongst prominent leaders and the Viceroy resulted into a temporary compromise, by which Jinnah agreed to nominate five persons to the interim government. These were Liaquat Ali Khan, I.I. Chundrigar, Abdur Rab Nishtar, Ghazanffar Ali Khan and Jogendra Nath Mandal.

The Muslim League entered the government without commitment to join the Constituent Assembly.

As a equal to these political developments, violent communal riots broke out in some districts of the Punjab, forcing the Governor to take over the administration of the province in his own hands. Mob frenzy of stabbing, killing and looting spread to Lahore. Rawalpindi, Amritsar, Multan, NWFP and other areas. Jawaharlal Nehru who visited Rawalpindi reported, "I have seen ghastly sights and I have heard of behaviour by human beings which would degrade brutes."According to official accounts, 2,049 persons were killed and over 1,000 seriously injured in the course of a fortnight.

The Congress Working Committee met on 8 March 1947 and passed the following resolution foreshadowing the Partition of India. "During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been snatched in the attempted to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion....Therefore, it is necessary to find a way which amounts to the least compulsion. This would necessitate division of the Punjab into two provinces so that the predominantly Muslim party may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part." When a section of the Congress leaders showed a sense of disagreement to this proposal, the President explained that the Congress had only suggested a division of the Punjab as a means of putting an end to violence, and that the same remedy would hold good for Bengal if the circumstances in that province were similar."

Lord Mountbatten assumed the office of Governor-General on 24 March 1947. He had discussions with prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and M.A. Jinnah and assessed the political situation in India in its proper perspective. A practical man with realistic approach as he was, he soon realized that in the present circumstances, the Cabinat Mission plan was unworkable and partition of India was inevitable. In fact he was deeply moved by the rapid deterioration in communal relations that he was eager to affect the transfer of power without any delay.

The general principles of Partition having been agreed upon, the question arose of the fate of minorities of the Punjab and Bengal. At first Jinnah was adamant that these two provinces should be transferred to Pakistan. The Congress leaders, were, however, agreeable to the creation of Pakistan but opined that the Non-Muslim in the Punjab and Bengal living in districts contiguous to India and forming a majority of population in these areas, must be given the option to choose between Pakistan and India. This meant the creation of two separate Provinces of East Punjab and West Bengal. At this point of time, Jinnah pretested but he was reminded of the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League passed in March 1940.

On 18 May Mountbatten proceeded to London to seek the advice of the British cabinet, and when he came back to New Delhi on 31 May, he announced the British Government's acceptance of the principles of partition, which would be affected probably on 15 August 1947. The points of procedure were as follows.

It the members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Punjab and Bengal were to decide in favour of partition by a simple majority, a boundary commission, set up by the Viceroy, would demarcate the appropriate boundaries Sind and Baluchistan would decide which Constituent Assembly to join. Regarding the Frontier Province there was to be a referendum to ascertain whether it would opt for Pakistan or not. Besides the Muslim-majority district of Sylhet was to decide by means of referendum as to whether it would join East Bengal or remain in Assam.

Both the major political parties of the country—Congress and the Muslim League—were agreeable to this plan.

The Sikhs were dissatisfied with this plan as their population was divided in half by the possible line of partition in the undivided Punjab. The Red Shirts led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan put forward the demand for an independent Pakhtoonistan. This was not acceptable and as a protest, they did not participate in the plebiscite which went in favour of joining chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe gave a verdict for the division of Bengal and Punjab. Thus, West Bengal and East Punjab opted for India, and East Bengal, West Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan became parts of Pakistan. The district of Sylhet joined Pakistan.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was also agreeable to the plan of Mountbatten. His experience of working with the League members in the interim Executive Council convinced him that a stage had come when hindus and Muslims could not be united into one nation. He "came to the fateful decision that unless the country was partitioned, chaos and anarchy would spread throughout the land."

With the passage of Independence of India Act by the British parliament in July 1947, the preliminaries for the relinquishment of authority were completed; administrative arrangements consequent upon the partition of India were largely accomplished and the preparations for the future relations of the Indian states and their accession to the Union of India were concluded with the signing of the Standstill Agreement and the Instrument of Accession by all the states, excepting three states, *i.e.*, Kashmir, Hyderbad and Jungadah.

At this, Muslim League felt much satisfied and Jinnah was much jubilant at the achievement of the highest aim of his life. He got a part of Punjab, NWFP, Sind, a part of Bengal and Baluchistan as provinces of Pakistan. when he took over as the first Governor-General of Pakistan, he told his A.D.C. on his arrival at Karachi, "I never thought it would

happen. In never expected to see Pakistan in my life-time." In fact, Jinnah had made up his mind as early as 1937 that the solution of the communal problem lay in the separation of the Muslims in the majority areas from India, and since then he played his cards well and never intended to compromise or surrender on his main demand. "His attitude towards the government was ambivalent—a combination of compliance and swagger. He cleverly exploited the British animosity towards the Congress and won the power of vote over all plans of constitutional advance or administrative reform."

The leaders of the Congress were yearning for power as Mahatma Gandhi commented. Jawaharlal Nehru confessed, "Well, I suppose it was the compulsion of events. A larger India would have constant troubles, constant disintegrating pulls....And so we accepted and said, let us build up a strong India....The truth is that we were tired men....Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw the fires burning in the Punjab and heard everyday of the killings. The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it."

At last the historic day of August 15 arrived and it indeed was the last day of the one hundred and fifty years of British rule in India. Exactly at the stoke of the midnight hour, Earl Mountbatten of Burma, the last British Governor-General and Viceroy of India, entered the Assembly Chamber to address the Legislative and give a message of greeting and goodwill from the King, who ceased from this moment to be the Emperor of India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, rose to move the adoption of the pledge of dedication to the new Dominion of India in an atmosphere surcharged with emotion. He said,"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly, or in full measure but very substantially... A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

"The future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer....And so we have to labour and to work and work hard to give reality to our dreams. Peace has been said to be indivisible so is freedom so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this.

"To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to joint with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill-sell or abusing others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell."

These sentiments were expressed by a person, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, educated in the academic nurseries of Harrow and Cambridge, consistently guided and advised by no less a person than his own father, Pandit Motilal Nehru and later on by Mahatma Gandhi. He suffered in British-Indian jails, at intervals, for a long period of nine years, wrote about India, the Indian people and the world, travelled a lot to understand well the social and economic plight of his people. In fact, during the long drawn struggle in which he participated along with members of his family, he had completely identified himself with the Indian masses. At times, his differences with Gandhiji brought forth tangible results, because both loved and respected each other and it became difficult for them to function in isolation. It in fact goes to the credit of the two leaders that they maintained perfect discipline in the cadre of *satyagrahis* in various movements and launched a well-organised onslaught on the functioning of bureaucracy in our country. It would be pertinent to say that the activities of these two leaders had nightmarish effect on the successive Viceroys in India.

The ceremony began with the swearing in of the new Governor-General, Earl Mountbatten. Then Dr. Rajendra Prasad read out the congratulatory messages from all over the world. This was followed by the address by the address of Earl Mountbatten to the Assembly. He related briefly the events leading up to this great day. At the end he observed, "From today I am your constitutional Governor-General and I would ask you to regard me as one of yourselves, devoted wholly to the furtherance of India's interests."

21

Freedom Here and Now*

I congratulate you on the resolution that you have just passed. I also congratulate the three comrades on the courage they have shown in pressing their amendments to a division, even though they knew that there was an over whelming majority in favour of the resolution, and I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so, they had nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. We have learned to hold on to our beliefs in the confidence that we are in the right. It behoves us to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was, therefore, glad to see that these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.

Having congratulated them on their courage, let me say that what they asked this Committee to accept through their amendments was not the correct representation of the situation. Those friends ought to have pondered over the appeal made to them by the Maulana to withdraw their amendments; they should have carefully followed the explanations given by Jawaharlal. Had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right which they now want the Congress to concede has already been conceded by the Congress.

Time was when every Mussalman claimed the whole of India as his motherland. During the years that the Ali brothers were with me the assumption underlying all their talks and discussions was that India belonged as much to the Musslamans as to the Hindus. I can testify to the fact that this was their innermost conviction and not a mask; I lived with them for years. I spent days and nights in their company. And I make bold to say that their utterances were the honest expression of

* Gandhi speech at the AICC meeting, Bombay, 8 August 1942.

their beliefs. I know there are some who say that I take things too readily at their face value, that I am gullible. I do not think I am such a simpleton, nor am I so gullible as these friends take me to be. But their criticism does not hurt me. I should prefer to be considered gullible rather than deceitful.

What these Communist friends proposed through amendments is nothing new. It has been repeated from thousands of platforms. Thousands of Mussalmans have told me that if the Hindu-Muslim question was to be solved satisfactorily, it must be done in my lifetime. I should feel flattered at this; but how can I agree to a proposal which does not appeal to my reason? Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new thing. Millions of Hindus and Musslamans have sought after it. In consciously strive for its achievement from my boyhood, while at school, I made it a point to cultivate the friendship of Muslim and Parsi co-students. I believed even at the tender age that the Hindus in India, if they wished to live in peace and amity with the other communities, should assiduously cultivate the virtue of neighbourliness. It did not matter, I felt if I made no special effort to cultivate friendship with Hindus, but I must make friends with at least a few Mussalmans, it was as counsel for a Mussalman merchant that I went to South Africa. I made friends with other Mussalmans there, even with the opponents of my client, and gained a reputation for integrity and good faith. I had among my friends and co-workers Muslims as well as Parsis. I captured their hearts and when I left finally for India, I felt them sad and shedding tears of grief at the separation.

In India too I continued my efforts and left no stone unturned to achieve that unity. It was my life-long aspiration for it that made me offer fullest co-operation to the Musslamans in the Khilafat movement. Muslims throughout the country accepted me as their true friend.

How then is it that I have now come to be regarded as so evil and detestable? Had I any axe to grind in supporting the Khilafat movement? True, I did in my heart of hearts cherish a hope that it might enable me to save the cow. I am a worshipper of the cow. I believe the cow and myself to be the creation of the same God, and I am prepared to sacrifice my life in order to save the cow. But, whatever my philosophy of life and my ultimate hopes, I joined the movement in no spirit of bargain. We cooperated in the struggle for the Khilafat solely in order to discharge my obligation to my neighbour who, I saw, was in distress. The Ali brothers, had they been alive today, would have testified to the

truth of this assertion. And so would many others bear me out in that it was not a bargain on my part for saving the cow. The cow, like the Khilafat, stood on her own merits. As an honest man, a true neighbour and a faithful friend, it was incumbent on me to stand by the Musslamans in the hour of their trial.

In those days, I shocked the Hindus by dining with the Musslamans, though with the passage of time they have got used to it. Maulana Bari told me, however, that though he would insist on having me as his guest, he would not allow me to dine with him, lest some day he should be accused of a sinister motive. And so whenever I had occasion to stay with him, he called a Brahmin cook and made special arrangements for separate cooking. Firangi Mahal, his residence, was an old-style structure with limited accommodation; yet he cheerfully bore all hardships and carried out his resolve from which I could not dislodge him. It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and mobility that inspired us in those days. The members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of sister communities. They respected one another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Now a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity, that nobility of spirit, disappeared now? I should ask all Mussalmans, including Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present impasse. Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath, it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone, he will realize and admit that I had no designs on Musslamans and that I had never betrayed their interest. Where is the escape for me, if I injure their cause or betray their interests? My life is entirely at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it, whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.

To those who have been indulging in a campaign of abuse and vilification, I would say, "Islam enjoins you not to revile even an enemy. Th Prophet treated even enemies with kindness and tried to win them over by his fairness and generosity; are you followers of that Islam or of any other? If you are followers of the true Islam, does it behove you to distrust the words of one who makes a public declaration of his faith?

You may take it from me that one day you will regret the fact that you distrusted and killed one who was a true and devoted fried of yours." It cuts me to the quick to see that the more I appeal and the more the Maulana importunes, the more intense does the campaign of vilification grow. To me, these abuses are like bullets. They can kill me, even as a bullet can put an end to my life. You may kill me. That will not hurt me. But what of those who indulge in abusing? They bring discredit to Islam. For the fair name of Islam, I appeal to you to resist this unceasing campaign of abuse and vilification.

Maulana Saheb is being made a target for the filthiest abuse. Why? because he refuses to exert on me the pressure of his friendship. He realizes that it is a misuse of friendship to seek to compel a friend to accept as truth what he knows is an untruth.

To the Quaid-e-Azam I would say: "Whatever is true and valid in the claim for Pakistan is already in your hands. What is wrong and untenable is in nobody's gift so that it can be made over to you. Even if someone were to succeed in imposing untruth on others, he would not be able to enjoy for long the fruits of such a coercion. God dislikes pride and keeps away from it. God would not tolerate a forcible imposition of an untruth."

The Quaid-e-Azam says that he is compelled to say bitter things but that he cannot help giving expression to his thoughts and his feelings. Similarly I would say: "I consider myself a friend of Mussalmans. Why should I then not give expression to the things nearest to my heart, even at the cost of displeasing them? How can I conceal my innermost thoughts from them? I should congratulate the Quaid-e-Azam on his frankness in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings, even if they sound bitter to his hearers. But even so why should the Mussalmans sitting here be reviled, if they do not see eye to eye with him? If millions of Mussalmans are with you, can you not afford to ignore the handful of Musslamans who may appear to you to be misguided? Why should one with the following of several millions be afraid of a majority community, or of the minority being swamped by the majority? How did the prophet work among the Arabs and the Mussalmans? How did he propagate Islam? Did He say he would propagate Islam only when he commanded a majority? I appeal to you for the sake of Islam to ponder over what I say. There is neither fair play nor justice in saying that the Congress must accepts thing even if it does not believe in it and even if it goes counter to principles it holds dear.

Rajaji said: "I do not believe in Pakistan. But Mussalmans ask for it, Mr. Jinnah asks for it, and it has become an obsession with them. Why not then say 'yes' to them just now? the same Jinnah will later on realize the disadvantages of Pakistan and will forego the demand." I said: "it is not fair to accept as true a thing which I hold to be untrue, and ask others to do so in the belief that the demand will not be pressed when the time comes for getting it finally. If I hold the demand to be just, should concede it this very day. I should not agree to it merely in order to placate Jinnah Saheb. Many friends have come and asked me to agree to it. But I cannot be party to a course of action with a false promise. At any rate, it is not my method."

The Congress has no sanction but the moral one for enforcing its decisions. It believes that true democracy can only be the outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally abjured from world affairs. If this is true, the solution of Hindu-Muslim question, too, cannot be achieved by a report to violence. If the Hindus tyrannize over the Mussalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation? It is for the same reason that I do not believe in the possibility of establishing world peace through violence as the English and American statesmen propose to do. The Congress has agreed to submit all the differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions. If even this fairest of proposals is unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself to agree to an impossibility? To demand the vivisection of living organism, is to ask for its very life. It is a call to war. The Congress cannot be party to such a fratricidal war. Those Hindus who, like Dr. Moonje and Shri Savarkar, believe in the doctrine of the sword may seek to keep the Mussalmans under Hindu domination. I not represent that section. I represent the Congress. You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays the golden egg. If you distrust the Congress, you may rest assured that there is to be perpetual war between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, and the country will be doomed to continued warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it.

It is for that reason that I say to Jinnah Saheb, "You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equality is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity, you can take only by the sword and in no other manner".

There is much in my heart that I would like to pour out before this assembly. One thing which was uppermost in my heart I have already dealt with. You may take it from me that it is with me a matter or life and death. If we Hindus and Mussalmans mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the efforts to be free from the shackles of this Empire. If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what objection can there be for Mussalmans against joining this struggle for India's freedom? The Hindus and Mussalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom. Jinnah Saheb thinks the war will last long. I do not agree with him. If the war goes on for six months more, how shall we be able to save China?

I therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. Freedom cannot now wait for the realization of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise sufficed. But the Congress must win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. And forget not that the freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for Congressmen alone but for all the forty crores of the Indian people.

The Quaid-e-Azam has said that the Muslim League is prepared to take over the rule from the Britishers if they are prepared to hand it over to the Muslim League, for the British took over the empire from the hands of the Muslims. This, however, will be Muslim Raj. The offer made by Maulana Saheb and by me does not imply establishment of Muslim Raj or Muslim domination. The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or any community. It believes in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jews—everyone of the communities inhabiting this vast country. If Muslim Raj is inevitable, then let it be; but how can we give it the stamp of our assent? How can we agree to the domination of one community over the others?

Millions of Mussalmans in this country come from Hindu stock. How can their homeland be any other than India? My eldest son embraced Islam some years back. What would his homeland be—Porbandar or the Punjab? I ask the Mussalmans: "If India is not your homeland, what other country do you belong to? In what separate homeland would you put my son who embraced Islam?" His mother wrote him a letter after his conversion, asking him if he had on

embracing Islam given up drinking which Islam forbids to its followers. To those who gloated over the conversion, she wrote to say" "I do not mind his becoming a Mussalman, so much as his drinking. Will you, as pious Mussalmans, tolerate his drinking even after his conversion? He has reduced himself to the state of a rake by drinking. It you are going to make a man of his again, his conversion will have been turned to good account. You will, therefore, please see that he as Mussalman abjures wine and woman. If that change does not come about, his conversion goes in vain and our non-cooperation with him will have to continue."

India is without doubt the homeland of all the Mussalmans inhabiting this country. Every Mussalman should, therefore, cooperate in the fight for India's freedom. The Congress does not belong to any one class or community: it belongs to the whole nation. It is open to Mussalmans to take possession of the Congress. They can, if they like, swamp the Congress by their numbers, and can steer it along the course which appeals to them. The Congress is fighting not on behalf of the whole nation, including the minorities. It would hurt me to hear of a single instance of a Mussalman being killed by a Congressman. In the coming revolution, Congressmen will sacrifice their lives in order to protect the Mussalman against a Hindu's attack and *vice versa.* It is a part of their creed, and is one of the essentials on non-violence. You will be expected on occasions like these not to lose your heads. Every Congressman, whether a Hindu or a Mussalman, owes this duty to the organization to which he belongs. The Mussalman who will act in this manner will render a service to Islam. Mutual trust is essential for success in the final nationwide struggle that is to come.

I have said that much greater sacrifices will have to be made this time in the wake of our struggle because of the opposition from the Musslim League and from Englishmen. You have seen the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle. It is a suicidal course that he has taken. it contains an open incitement to organizations which crop up like mushrooms to combine to fight the Congress. We have thus to deal with an expire whose ways are crooked. Ours is a straight path which we can tread even with our eyes closed. That is the beauty of *satyagraha.*

In satyagraha, there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth. Fraud and untruth today are stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the

land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to an extent it was possible for a human being to do. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this empire upheld on untruth and violence. However gigantic the preparations that the empire has made, we must get out of its clutches. How can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under the bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to carry a while? If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure. He had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world. Had the condition been different, I should have asked you to wait yet a while. But the situation now has become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it.

Nevertheless, the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks. What would you do in the meanwhile? What is the programme, for the interval, in which all can participate? As you know, the spinning-wheel is the first thing that occurs to me. I made the same answer to the Maulana. He would have none of it, though he understood its import later. The fourteen fold constructive programme is, of course, therefore you to carry out. What more should you do? I will tell you. Everyone of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism.

It is not a make believe that I am suggesting to you. It is the very essence of freedom. The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free being. He will plainly tell the master: "I was your bondslave till this moment, but I am a salve no longer. You may kill me if you like, but if you keep me alive, I wish to tell you that if you release me from the bondage of your won accord, I will ask nothing more from you. You used to feed and clothe me, though I could have provided food and clothing for myself by my labour. I hitherto depended on you instead of on Good for food and raiment. But God has now inspired me with an urge for freedom and I am today a freeman, and will no longer depend on you.'

You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. May be, he will propose the

abolition of salt tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say, "Nothing less than freedom."

Here is a *mantra* a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is: 'Do or die'. We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery. Every true Congressman or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge. Keep jaisl out of your consideration. If the government keep me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the government strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need, be, to attain that goal. Take a pledgee, with God and your own conscience as witness, that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down you lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or the faint-hearted.

A word to the journalists. I congratulate you on the support you have hitherto given to the national demand. I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would not ask you to snap the claims that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the government can't suppress. I know you have large properties in the form of printing presses etc., and you would be afraid lest the government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite an attachment of the printing presses voluntarily. For myself, I would not suppress my pen even if the presses was to be attached. As you know, my press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your standing committee, and you may declare that you will give up writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Frederick Puckle that he can't expect from you a command performance, that his press notes are full of untruth, and that you will refuse to publish them. You will openly declare that you are whole-heartedly with the Congress. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

From the Princes I ask with all respect due to them a very small thing. I am a well-wishers of the Princes. I was born in a state. My grandfather refused to statute with his right hand any Prince, as I feel he ought to have said, that even his own master could not compel him, his minister, to act against his conscience. I have eaten the Prince's salt and I would not be false to it. As a faithful servant, it is my duty to warn the Princes that if they will act while I am still alive, the Princes may come to occupy an honourable place in free India. In Jawaharlal's scheme of free India, no privilege or the privileged classes have a place. Jawaharlal considers all property to be State-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly: I do not. I have kept a place for the Princes and the *zamindars* in India that I envisage. I would ask the Princes in all humility to enjoy through renunciation. The Princes may renounce ownership over their properties and become their trustees in the true sense of the term. I visualize God in the assemblage of people. The Princes may say to their people: "You are the owners and master of the state and we are you servants." I would ask the Princes to become servants of the people and render to them an account of their own services. The empire too bestows power on the Princes, but they should prefer to drive power from their own people; and if they want to indulge in some innocent pleasures, they seek to do so as the servants of the people. I do not want the Princes to live as paupers. But I would ask them: "do you want to remain slaves for all time? Why should you instead of paying homage to a foreign power, not accept the sovereignty of your own people?" You may write to the Political Department: "The people are now awake. How are we to withstand an avalanche before which even the large empires are crumbling? We, therefore, shall belong to the people from today onwards. We, shall sink or swim with them." Believe me, there is noting unconstitutional in the course I am suggesting. There are, so far as I know, no treaties enabling the empire to coerce the Princes. The people of the states will also declare that though they are the Princes' subjects, the are part of the Indian nation and that they will accept the leadership of the Princes, if the latter cast their lot with the people but not otherwise. If this declaration enrages the Princes and they choose to kill the people, the latter will meet death bravely and unflinchingly, but will not go back on their word.

Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage

in a secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C.I.D. of your own, in spite of my advice to the contrary. But in the present struggle, we have to work openly and to receive bullets on our chest, without taking to our heels.

I have a word to say to government servant also. They may not, if they like, resign their posts yet. The late Justice Ranade did not resign his post, but he openly declared that he belonged to the congress. He said to the government that though he was a judge, he was congressman and would openly attend the sessions of the Congress, but that at the same time he would not let his political views warp his impartiality on the bench. He held the Social Reform Conference in the very *pandal* of the Congress. I would ask all the government servants to follow in the footsteps of Ranade and to declare their allegiance to the Congress as an answer to the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle.

This is all that I ask of you just now. I will now write to the Viceroy. You will be able to read the correspondence not just now but when I publish it with the Viceroy's consent. But you are free to aver that you support the demand to be put forth in my letter. A judge came to me and said: "we get secret circulars from highquarters. What are we to do?" I replied, "If I were in your place, I would ignore the circulars. You may openly say to the government: 'I have received your secret circular. I am however, with the Congress. Though I serve the government for my livelihood, I am not going to obey these secret circulars or to employ underhand method'."

Soldiers too are covered by the present programme. I do not ask them just now to resign their posts and to leave the army. The soldiers come to me, Jawaharlal and the Maulana and say: "we are wholly with you. We are tired of the government tyranny." To the soldiers I would say: "You may say to the government: 'Our hearts are with the Congress. We are not going to leave our posts. We will serve you so long as we receive your salaries. We will only your just order, 'but will refuse to fire on our own people'."

To those who lack the courage to do this much, I have nothing to say. They will go their own way. But if you can do this much, you may take it from me that the whole atmosphere will be electrified. Let the government then shower bombs, if they like. But no power on earth will then be able to keep you in bondage any longer.

If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their students after a while, I would not invite them to it. For the present, however, till the time that I frame a programme for the struggle, I would ask the students to say to their professors: "We belong to the Congress. Do you belong to the Congress, or to the government? If you belong to the Congress, you need not vacate your posts. You will remain at your post but teach us and lead us unto freedom". In all fights for freedom, the world over, the students have made very large contributions.

If in the interval that is left to us before the actual fight begins, you do even the little I have suggested to you, you will have changed the atmosphere and will have prepared the grounds for the next step.

There is much I should yet like to say. But my heart is heavy. I have already taken up much of your time. I have yet to say a few words in English also. I thank you for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me even at this later hour. It is just what true soldiers would do. The last twenty-two years, I have controlled my speech and pen and have stored up my energy. He is a true *brahmachari* who does not fritter away his energy. He will, therefore, always control his speech. That has been my conscious effort all these years. But today the occasion has come when I have to burden my heart before you. I have done so, every though it meant putting a strain on your patience; and I do not regret having done it. I have given you my message and through you I have delivered it to the whole of India.

22

Letter to Subhas Bose*

Allahabad

20.10.1937

My deary Subhas,

Your letter of the 17th. Certainly as suggested by you I shall discuss the *Bande Mataram* song with Dr. Tagore. I do not know that any formal statement is necessary by the Working Committee but we should be clear in our own minds. I have managed to get an English translation of *Ananda Math* and I am reading it at present to get the background of the song. It does seem that this background is likely to irritate the Muslims. Further there is the difficulty of the language which is not understood by most people. I do not understand it without the help of a dictionary.

There is no doubt that the present outcry against *Bande Mataram* is to a large extent a manufactured one by the communalists. At the same time there does seem some substance in it and people who are communalistically inclined have been affected by it. Whatever we do cannot be to pander to communalists' feelings but it, to meet real grievances where they exist.

I have decided now to reach Calcutta on the 25th morning. This will give me time to see Dr. Tagore as well as other friends.

As for disciplinary action, it is difficult for me to talk vaguely about strictness or leniency. Ultimately this has to be considered in relation to the general situation and to the the particular facts of the case. General speaking our policy was a strict one during the elections and immediately after. But later a certain leniency came in and a number

* *AICC Papers:* File P-5/1937.

of previous orders were revised on the party concerned apologising. In particular we felt that the denial of the four-anna membership to any person was not to be indulged in except in very special cases. Generally the punishment was in regard to the holding of offices or membership of an elected committee. If the past record of a person was good and he had erred merely at election time because of local factions and passions we tried to take a lenient view and on his apologising no further action was taken. But as I have said above each individual case has to be considered on its merits and even more important consideration is the result of such action on Congress work in future. If such action is good to help Congress work it must be taken. If it is likely to hinder then it is to be avoided. Many of our people are insufficiently developed in the political sense not to be affected by personal rivalires. And so they err occasionally without really wishing to go against the Congress. If it is possible to win them over and yet keep the prestige and discipline of the Congress, then it is worthwhile doing so. If a disciplinary action creates fairly widespread presentment among certain groups of Congressmen, then it has failed in its purpose.

There are various considerations that are to be borne in mind. But ultimately the matter should be decided by the provincial committee or its sub-committee. I dislike very much the idea of the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. interfering in provincial decisions except in friendly way by private advice or consultation. In rare cases interference may be called for. After all it is the P.C.C. which has to shoulder the burden of the work in the province and it is not fair to it to do anything which lessens its prestige. That is why our office has not taken any action in such matters directly and we have consistently tried to uphold the position of the P.C.C. At the same time we have tried to soothe the feelings of the parties concerned. Generally we have sent copies of our letters to the P.C.C. I was astonished to learn from Sarat that the secretary of the P.C.C. does not keep him in touch with our correspondence. This in itself shows a certain lack of cooperation in your office.

Apart from the general difficulty of dealing with party factions and the like, an additional difficulty is met with in Bengal and that is the communal one which is likely to get tied up with party rivaliries. Bengal, politically considered, the been almost entirely a Hindu province in the past, that is to say, Hindu Bengal has taken an active part in politics. This is not likely to remain so for long as more and more

Muslims are becoming politically awake. The question, therefore, is how far the Congress can influence these Muslims and bring them within its fold. If we are unable to do so they will strengthen the communal elements. And then we shall have a dominating communal element in the politics of Bengal. Thus, the situation is a different one and in everything that is done, in our general Congress work, in the assembly work, in disciplinary action that we take, all these wider considerations have to be borne in mind. I have no doubt that you and Sarat have these considerations in mind. The recent meeting of the Muslim League and the fulminations of Fazlul Huq there have shown the recrudescence of an intensive and low type of communalism. You may have to suffer for this in Bengal more than people in other provinces. But I do hope that you will be able to counter it by a wide appeal to the Muslim masses. There is no other way to meet it. I do not think that there is any real strength behind the Muslim League or its new fangled supporters. But it is our weakness that will make a difference. In facing this difficult situation it is wise to avoid as far as possible internal factions within the Congress and to try to end them.

About Tipperah district I can say nothing because obviously I do not know all the facts. But I have a vague feeling that if the situation is not handled carefully, it might strengthen the communal elements there and weaken the influence of the Congress on the Muslim masses. It is because of this that I wrote on this subject previously. But having written I do not propose to do anything else. It is for you and your colleagues to take such action as you think fit a proper.

As for Karimganj the facts that have been placed before me, and I have had sufficient matter from both sides, do leave a great doubt in my mind and in such matters. I would like to get the benefit of the doubt to the parties proceeded against. Apart from the merits of the case the larger considerations of keeping effective workers together also influences me. A curious situation has arisen. We have no intimation whatever from the B.P.C.C. that any action has been taken. So in the ordinary course we have issued notices of the AIIC meeting to all our members. We are not asked by someone in Karimganj to whom such a notice went, whether he can attend the meeting or not as the B.P.C.C. has taken action against him. As we have no official intimation we cannot take cognizance of this action, nor indeed do we have know exactly what it is. We have referred him to the B.P.C.C.

You ask me whether we want you to revise the penalty already imposed. I do not even know what this penalty is and on whom it has been imposed, except rather vaguely. If you and Sarat feel, however, having regard to all the circumstances that it might be better to revise the penalty then certainly you might do so. That is for you to decide, keeping all the wider consideration before you.

It hope you will share this letter with Sarat.

I am thinking of going from Calcutta after the AICC meeting to Assam and Sylhet for tour for a week or so. I have never been that way before. I shall not of course go into the local politics in these places. Still I should like to have your advice as to how proceed in such matters when I go there. I have already informed the B.P.C.C. about this tour of mine. I shall finally fix it up in Calcutta.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23

The Congress and the Muslims*

I have read Mr. Jinnah's latest statement with care. I agree with him that the Muslim League is a political organization and often acts on the political plane. But because it is confined to a religious group it is, like others of its kind, essentially a religious or communal organization. I can fully understand and appreciate a religious or cultural organization acting on a religious or cultural plane only. I can also understand a political organization acting politically, whatever its view might be. But to mix the two is to create confusion and prevent the proper decision of any issue. Mr. Jinnah tells us that the Muslim League is a political organization and its policy and programme differ in vital respects from that of the Congress. The mere fact that a person is born to or professes the faith of Islam does not surely mean that he must also conform to the political policy and programme of the Muslim League. If he disagrees with that policy, as large numbers of Muslim do, he must inevitably seek some other political organization whose policy and programme appeal to him. If he agrees with the Congress policy he will join it and function through it politically. That does not mean that he wants the disruption of Muslims. He is merely acting as politically-thinking people act. Obviously there are great differences of political opinion, *inter se,* among Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees, etc. Among each of these religious groups one may find Congressmen, socialists, anti-socialists, communists, liberals, direct-actionists, revolutionaries, moderates, extremists, believers in different kinds of economic theory, supporters of the Douglas credit system or any other system. These cleavages of political and economic opinion are rightly represented by political and economic parties in the public life of the country. But to from a religious or communal party, which also dabbles

* Nehru's Statement to the press, in the *Hindustan Times,* 5, May 1937.

in political and economic matters, cuts across these real cleavages of opinion on live issues and thus is an unreal party in the political sense. Or else it partly represents, as the Muslim League or Hindu Sabha or Sikh League may claim to represent, a certain section of a religious group which holds by certain political and economic theories. But even this it does not do with clarity and precision as it is always talking in terms of a religious group which, by its very nature, is a politically mixed one.

I do not agree with the policy of the Liberal Party but I can understand it. It is a political party which bases its appeal on a certain political theory and its doors are open to all. Hindus or Muslims or others, who agree with that theory. Not so the Muslim League or the Hindu Sabha.

Mr. Jinnah has failed to understand me if he thinks that I am out to destroy other parties. But, because I believe in the Congress policy and programme, I try my hardest to push that forward and to convert all others, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, etc., to that viewpoint. Mr. Jinnah, or the liberals, or any other individual or group, are perfectly entitled to push their policy forward in the same way. When then does Mr. Jinnah object to my working among the muslims for the spread of Congress ideals? The objection is not political, it is communal, and hence the confusion of thought and action. When Mr. Jinnah talks of the Mussalmans, or warns them to do this or that, he is not speaking politically but communally. He is presuming that all Mussalmans must inevitably think on the same political lines and these should be in accordance with the policy laid down by him and the Muslim League. Surely that is a large presumption.

Mr. Jinnah thinks that the Congress policy is wrong and harmful. I think likewise of his policy. We differ. Let us agree to differ and work democratically for the spread of our respective viewpoints. I would gladly welcome Mr. Jinnah as the leader of a purely political party open to all denominations and with a defined policy. Political and economic issues will then be placed clearly before the country and the people of the country, who will ultimately decide these issues, will be enabled to think about them on right lines. To appeal to Mussalmans or Hindus as religious groups on political matter is obviously the wrong thing. It is the medieval attitude, when politics and economics were in the background, and it cannot possibly fit in with the modern world. It is

because of this that I say that I find it difficult to think no communal lines.

It is very unfair of Mr. Jinnah to say that the Congress considers it utter nonsense to safeguard the rights and interests of the minorities. The very reverse of this is true. In so far as religious and cultural and linguistic rights are concerned (as these are generally considered to be the basic minority rights) these have been amply safeguarded by the Congress as far as solemn declarations can safeguard them. These may be other questions which require consideration, and certainly occasions have arisen in the past and will arise in the future, in this imperfect world, when political adjustments are desirable in regard to minorities. The Congress is fully alive to this and is always ready, when such occasions offer themselves, to help in bringing about such an adjustment. But political adjustments must be in consonance with a basic political policy. To have a relatively minor adjustment at the expense of fundamentals is not an adjustment; it is the uprooting of the whole structure, a complete loss of equilibrium.

The Congress does not and cannot accept the Communal Award because it is a negation of our fundamental principles of democracy and of a united India. It is uncompatible with freedom. But Mr. Jinnah knows that the Congress Party is to get it altered in cooperation with, and with the goodwill of, the communities concerned.

When Mr. Jinnah says, quite rightly, that the Muslim League differs in vital respects from the Congress in political matters, does he expect the Congress, including the Muslims who agree with the Congress, to give up its policy, in deference to the Muslim League, a policy which has been a beacon-light to us and to millions in this country these many years, and for which so many of us have gone repeatedly through the valley of the shadow? Mr. Jinnah knows that in the hour of our trial when we faced the might of a proud Empire, many prominent leaders of the Muslim League sought alliance with the die-hard leaders of the Conservative Party in England, than whom there are no greater enemies of Indian freedom. Are we to submit to them now, we who have refused to submit to the embattled power of that Empire, and who prepare afresh for fresh trials and tribulations in the struggle for independence which has become the life-blood of all our activities?

Mr. Jinnah refers apparently to my faith in socialism. It is true that I desire to put an end to imperialism all over the world and I look

forward to the establishment of a socialist state not only in India but elsewhere also. I believe in a world order based on the principles of socialism, and I am convinced that only thus will the distempers and miseries that afflict us find final burial. But the Congress is not committed to this creed or policy. Nevertheless the Congress thinks and acts in terms of the masses, Hindu or Muslim or other, seeks strength from them, and determines its policy with reference to them. Therefore, it considers that even political adjustments with minorities will have a sure and more real basis if the masses are enabled to have their say in the matter.

Do I talk like a dictator or a sovereign authority? It is for others to judge. But may I venture to say that Mr. Jinnah, when he objects to our carrying on our ordinary political work among Muslims or issues mandates and warnings to Mussalmans as a whole, regardless of their political opinions or affiliations, adopts an attitude which may, without impropriety, be called dictatorial?

24

India and the World*

Faced by repeated crises and engrossed in their domestic troubles, it is not surprising that the people of the West should pay little attention to India. A few may feel drawn to the rich past of India and admire her ancient culture, some may feel an instinctive sympathy with a people struggling for freedom, others may have the humanitarian urge to condemn the exploitation and brutal suppression of a great people by an imperialist power. But the great majority are supremely ignorant of conditions in India. They have troubles of their own; why add to them?

Any yet every intelligent dabbler in public affairs knows that the problems of the modern world cannot be kept in watertight compartments; they cannot be dealt with successfully separately and without regard to the others; they run into each other and, in the final analysis, from one single world problem with many different forces. Events in the deserts and waste lands of East Africa echo in distant chancellories and cast their heavy shadow over Europe; a shot fired in eastern Siberia may set the world on fire. Many difficult problems trouble Europe today, and yet it may well be that the future historian, with a truer perspective, will consider China and India as the most significant problems of today, and as having a greater influence on the future shaping of world events. For, essentially, India and China are world problems, and to ignore them, or to minimise their significance, is to betray a woeful ignorance of the trend of world affairs and to fail to understand completely the basic disease from which all of us suffer.

The problem of India is thus of the present, of today. To admire or condemn her past does not help us much, except in so far as an understanding of the past helps us to understand the present. We have to realize that any big thing that will happen there will affect the larger

* *National Herald*, 1 June 1939.

world to a great extent, and none of us, wherever we may live and whatever national or other allegiance might claim us, can be unaffected by it. It is, therefore, from this wider point of view that we must consider it, as a part of the more immediate problems that confrontus.

It is wellknown that the possession of India has far more than a century and a half vitally affected British foreign and domestic policy; the wealth and exploitation of India gave England the needed capital to develop her great industries in the early days of the industrial devolution and then provided her with markets for her manufactured goods; India was ever in the background in the Napoleonic war as well as in the Crimean war, and the desire to safeguard the routes to India led England to interfere with Egypt and the countries of the Middle East. That governing policy has continued in the postwar world, and England still clings tenaciously to these routes. Soon after the Great War there even came a grandiose vision to British statesmen of founding a great Middle Eastern empire stretching from Constantinople to India. But that vision faded chiefly because of Soviet Russia and Kemal Pasha, and the rise of Reza Shah in Persia, and Amanullah in Afghanistan, and the establishment of the French mandate in syria. The great idea did not materialize, but, even so, England managed to keep a fair measure of control over the land routes to India and, because of this, came into conflict with Turkey over Mosul. It is that governing policy which has induced England suddenly to become a champion of the League of Nations in Ethiopia. Her moral instincts were not so much roused when the League was flouted in Manchuria.

The world problem is ultimately one of imperialism—the finance-imperialism of the present day. In Europe and elsewhere the rise of fascism is one very important aspect of the problem, as well as rise and growing strength of Soviet Russia, as representing a new order fundamentally opposed to that of imperialism. The lining-up of Europe is mutually hostile and anti-fascist groups represents the conflict of that imperialism with the new forces that threaten it. In the colonial and subject countries the same conflict takes the shape of nationalist movements struggling for freedom, with an ever-developing social issue colouring and influencing nationalism. Imperialism functions increasingly in a fascist way in its colonial dependencies. Thus England, proudly laying stress on its democratic constitution at home, acts after the fascist fashion in India.

It is clear that any breach in the imperialist front anywhere has its repercussions all over the world. A victory of fascism in Europe or

elsewhere strengthens imperialism and reacts everywhere, a setback to it wakens imperialism. Similarly, the triumph of a freedom movement in a colonial or subject country is a blow to imperialism and fascism, and it is, therefore, easy to understand why the Nazi leaders frown on Indian nationalism, and express their approval of the continuation of British domination in India. The problem, considered in its basic aspects, is simple enough, and yet, in the intricate play of various world forces, it sometimes becomes very complicated, as when two imperialisms confront one another and each tries to exploit the nationalist or anti-fascist tendencies in the subject countries of the other. The only way to get over these complications is to consider the fundamental aspects and not to be led away by opportunist motives of gaining a temporary advantage. Else the temporary advantage is apt to prove a grave disadvantage and a burden later on.

India, both historically and by virtue of its importance, has been and is the classic land of modern imperialism. Any disturbance of the imperialist hold on India is bound to have far-reaching consequences in world affairs—it will make a tremendous difference to the world position of Great Britain, and it will give a great impetus to the freedom movements of other colonial countries and thus shake up other imperialisms. A free India would inevitably play a growing part in international affairs, and that part is likely to be on the side of world peace and against imperialism and its offshoots.

Some people imagine that India may develop into a free Dominion of the British group of nations like Canada or Australia. This seems to be a fantastic idea. Even the existing Dominions, in spite of their numerous links with Great Britain, are gradually drifting apart as their economic interests conflict. The drift is greatest in the case of Ireland, partly for historical reasons, and South Africa. There are few natural links between India and England, and there is a historical and evergrowing hostility between them. In many parts of the empire there is racial ill-treatment and a policy of exclusion of Indians. But more important still, there is a conflict of economic interests. So long as India is controlled by the British Government this conflict is resolved in favour of Britain, but the moment India becomes a real Dominion the two will pull different ways and a break would become inevitable, if the present capitalist order survives till then. There is another interesting aspect to this question. India, by virtue of her size, population, and potential wealth, is by far the most important member of the British Empire. So

long as the rest of the empire exploits her, she remains on the imperial fringe. But a free India in the British group of nations would inevitably tend to become the centre of gravity of the group; Delhi might challenge London as the nerve-centre of the Empire. That position would become intolerable for England as well as the white Dominions. They would prefer to have India outside their group, an independent but friendly country, rather than to be best of their own household.

It seems likely, therefore, that there will be no real halfway house to Indian freedom. When India is strong enough or when world events force the pace, she will emerge as a completely free country. What form that freedom will be accompanied, or followed soon after, by social freedom and a new economic order, it is difficult to say, for this depends on so many factors. Inevitably world crisis will affect her and hasten or delay that freedom and shape the social content of it. It is probable that the longer political freedom is delayed the more will the social question dominate the situation; even now it is in the forefront of Indian affairs. Economic conditions are forcing this issue forward, as well as the successful example of Soviet Russia.

When will Indian freedom come? It is dangerous to prophesy. But the world is moving rapidly and crisis succeeds crisis, and the weakening of the whole of British imperialism may be nearer than many people imagine. Within India the national movement has grown tremendously during the last sixteen years, ever since Mahatma Gandhi took its lead and inspired millions to united effort and sacrifice. During these sixteen years it has continued without a break, though with ups and downs, and three times—in 1920-22, 1930-31, 1932-34—it has functioned through powerful movements of non-cooperation and civil disobedience which shook the fabric of British rule in India. The strength of these movements can be judged from the British reaction to them. This took the shape of fierce repression of the typical fascist kind, with suppression of civil liberties, of press, speech, and meeting, of confiscation of funds, lands, and buildings; of the proscription of hundreds of organizations, including schools, universities, hospitals, children's societies, social work clubs, and of course political and labour organizations; of the sending to prison of hundreds of thousands of men and women; and of barbarous beatings and ill-treatment of prisoners and others. On the other hand, an attempt was made to create divisions in the nationalist ranks by offering bribes and inducements to minority groups, and by consolidating all the feudal, reactionary, and obscurantist elements in the country behind the British Government. The outward

symbol of this joining together of the reactionaries was the Round Table Conference in London, and the result of this union was the new 'Constitution' Act passed by the British Government which in effect tightens the hold of British imperialism and gives greater importance to the reactionary element in the country.

Meanwhile new social forces have gathered strength in India and socialistic and Marxist ideas have spread, in both the ranks of organized labour and the National Congress. The Socialist Party forms an important minority in the National Congress and has an increasing influence. This rise of socialist ideas has resulted in the development of certain fissiparous tendencies within the Congress, and further developments are likely to make this ideological cleavage more marked. On the whole, the Congress functions as a kind of joint front (including many groups)—a *front populaire*—against British, imperialism whilst in opposition to it is a joint front of the reactionary and feudal elements with that imperialism. The situation is comparable to the anti-fascist and fascist groupings in Europe. In between the two main groups are smaller groups of people who vacillate, though their sympathies are with the national movement.

The present position in India appears to be complex because the country is recovering from the exhaustion of the last civil disobedience movement, and during such periods a certain confusion is inevitable. New ideas find ready acceptance by many and frighten others. In spite of the fact that there is no civil disobedience movement functioning and conditions might be considered normal, the British Government are continuing their severe repression and suppression of civil liberties. In the name of suppressing communism, the labour movement is harassed, many trade unions are declared illegal, labour leaders sent to prison; in the name of suppressing terrorism, political work is stopped in some parts of the country. Many important organizations, political and labour, continue to be banned. A law, which was contemptuously thrown out by the legislature, has been enacted by the Viceroy's executive authority giving enormous powers, to the executive and the police to suppress every form of civil liberty and public activity. Thousands are kept permanently in prison without trail or charge, many other thousands are sent to prison for sedition or other political offences. This is the functioning of British rule in India in normal times. This is also the measure of the strength of the freedom movements in India, as well as of the fear of the British Government of it. For the British Government

lives in a continuous state of alarm, and when a government is afraid it acts strangely and wildly.

It is clear that the British Government cannot succeed in putting an end to the freedom movement, it can only keep it down for a while when the nation is exhausted. It is also clear that the new Act has displeased and irritated all active elements in the country, and they can never submit to it willingly. There is more resentment and hostility against imperialist domination in India than at any previous time. Gandhi has for the time being retired from active politics, but he continues to be, and will continue to be, far and away, the most dominant and influential figure in India, capable of moving millions, and he might return to the political field at any crucial moment. To imagine that he is a back number in Indian politics is the most futile of errors. There are conflicts of ideologies in India and a pulling in different directions, as is natural in a living moment in a great country, but there is a unity in the opposition to British imperialism, except in those classes which profit by it, or the creation of that imperialism. There can be little doubt that the not too distant future will see great changes in India, and the approach to freedom.

All over the world today, behind the political and economic conflicts, there is a spiritual crisis, a questioning of old values and beliefs, and a search for a way out of the tangle. In India also, perhaps more so than elsewhere, there is this crisis of the spirit, for the roots of Indian culture still go down deep into the ancient soil, and though the future beckons, the past holds back. The old culture offers no solution of modern problems: the capitalist West, which shone so brightly in the nineteenth century, has lost its glamour, and seems to be inextricably involved in its own contradictions; the new civilization being built up in the Soviet countries attracts, in spite of some dark patches, and offers hope for world peace, and a prospect of ending the misery and exploitation of millions. It may be that India will resolve this crisis of the spirit by turning more and more to this new order, but when she does so, it will be in her own way, making the structure fit in with the genius of her people.

Vendredi, Paris (1936)

A World Federation

One of the tragedies of history is the slowness with which people's minds adapt themselves to a changing environment. The world changes

from day to day, not so our minds which are peculiarly static and insist on imagining that today is the same as yesterday and tomorrow will not differ greatly. This lag between our minds and reality prevents us from solving the problems of the day and produces war and revolution and much else that afflicts the world....

The old political and economic structure is rotten and moth-eaten and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot hold it together for long. We discuss the problem of the states as if it was a question of bargaining or give and take between the rulers and the people, with the paramount power taking a share of the spoils. But the states simply cannot fit in the modern world and no amount of argument or soft words can change that fundamental fact. It is on the basis of this fact, that they are outworn, decadent systems, which should have been decently buried long ago, that all consideration must proceed. Systems like individuals have their span of life and they cannot go beyond it.

The land system again is intimately connected, or should be connected, with a modern economy. If it is not so connected it must inevitably decay, as it has done. The problem is a scientific, impersonal one and has little to do with our love for the *zamindar* or the tenant. It is patent that our land system is a drag on the development of the nation and impedes our progress; such systems in other countries have give place to others. So it must inevitably go here also....

It is difficult to conceive of effective world cooperation at present because there are forces and powerful nations which are bent on following a contrary policy. Yet it may be possible to have the right objective and to lay the foundations of such cooperation even now, though it may not be worldwide to begin with. Intelligent opinion all over the world and vast numbers of people are eager and anxious for this to happen, but governments, vested interests and groups come in the way.

A faint glimpse of this world cooperation came to President Wilson twenty years ago and he sought to realize it. But the war treaties and the statesmen of that generation searched the idea, and the great pile of the League of Nations rises mournfully today in Geneva like a mausoleum enshrining the dead body of a great hope. It had to die as it started under wrong auspices and with the seeds of death within. It was an attempt to stabilize something which could not endure, to protect the imperialisms and special interests of the victor nations.

Its cry for peace meant the continuation of an unjust *status quo* all over the world, its democracy was a cloak for the subjection of many peoples and nations. It had to die because it was not brave enough to live. There can be no resurrection of that dead body.

But there can be a resurrection of the idea that the I cague enshrined, not in the limited, twisted and perverse way that took shape in Paris and Geneva, but fuller, more powerful and organic and based on collective peace, freedom and democracy. On no other basis can it seek rebirth or find sustenance.

A world union is necessary today. unhappily, it will not come because those in authority are children of the old world which has ceased to be and cannot think or act in terms of the new. It will not come before the world is shattered again by war and millions have perished. But it will come because there is no other way out. Such a union can have nothing to do which imperialism or fascism and must be based on the fullest democracy and freedom, and submitting in international matters to the union legislature to which it sends its representatives. Inevitably it will have to work under a planned and socialized economy in order to end the conflicts of today.

Chronology

1915

9 January	:	Gandhi and Kasturba landed at Apollo Bunder, Bombay.
19 February	:	Death of Gopal Krishna Gokhale at Poona.
21 February	:	Lahore conspiracy unearthed.
18 March	:	Defence of India Act passed.
24 April	:	Gandhi met prominent members of Muslim League in Madras.
20 May	:	*Satyagraha Ashram* inaugurated at Kochrale near Ahmedabad.
26 May	:	Gandhi received Kaiser-i-Hind medal in Poona.
30 September	:	Meeting of Committee for South African Indian Fund in Bombay.
3 November	:	Pherozeshah Mehta passed away in Bombay.
27-29 December	:	Session of Indian National Congress in Bombay under the presidentship of S.P. Sinha.
30 December	:	All India Muslim league met in Bombay under the chairmanship of Mazhar-ul-Haq.

1916

16 January	:	Appointment of Lord Chelmsford as Viceroy of India announced.
4 February	:	Lord Hardinge laid foundation of the Banaras Hindu University.
6 February	:	Gandhi's speech during Banaras University Week under the presidentship of Maharaja of Darbhanga.

20 March	:	In Imperial Legislative Council, Madan Mohan Malaviya moved a resolution urging abolition of system of Indian indentured labour.
4 April	:	Lord Hardinge left India; Lord Chelmsford, the new Viceroy, arrived in Bombay.
21-23 August	:	AICC meeting at Allahabad; the scheme of self-government for India was discussed.
28 May	:	Madras government demanded security under Press Act from Annie Besant as printer of *New India.*
12 June	:	Annie Besant founded an Auxiliary Home Rule League in London.
12 August	:	Bal Gangadhar Tilak ordered to enter into a bond for good behaviour for one year; security given.
21 September	:	Annie Besant founded Home Rule League in Madras.
22 October	:	In Bombay Provincial Conference moved resolution protesting against working of Defence of India Act.
1 November	:	Annie Besant prohibited from entering Central Provinces.
17 November	:	All India Congress Committee and Muslim League held joint conference in Calcutta.
26-30 December	:	Session of Indian National Congress at Lucknow under the presidentship of Ambika Charan Majumdar.
31 December	:	Session of Muslim League in Bombay.

1917

7 February	:	Viceroy's speech in the Imperial Legislative Council.
2 March	:	Gandhi told people to join defence forces in 'overwhelming numbers'.
15 April	:	Gandhi expressed views on situation in Champaran.

17 May	:	First annual conference of Indian Home Rule League held at Nasik under the presidentship of Joseph Baptista.
1 June	:	Planters sent representation to the government.
10 June	:	Government resolution announced terms of Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee.
30 June	:	Death of Dadabhai Naoroji.
7 July	:	Gandhi wrote to Viceroy and called internment of Annie Besant 'a big blunder'.
17 July	:	E.S. Montagu appointed Secretary of State for India.
19 July	:	Meeting of Champaran Committee at Bettiah.
28 July	:	Joint Conference of the Congress Committee and Muslim League Reform Council in Bombay.
10 August	:	Meeting of Champaran Committee agreed on abolition of *tinkathia.*
14 August	:	Champaran Committee discussed Gandhi's suggestions and adjourned.
20 August	:	In the House of Commons, E.S. Montagu declared British government's policy of 'increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration'.
2 September	:	Bombay Provincial Congress Committee considered the implications of passive resistance campaign against coercive measures of the government.
17 September	:	Annie Besant, Wadia and Arundale released.
21 September	:	In the Imperial Legislative Council, Madan Mohan Malaviya moved resolution urging holding of I.C.S. examination in India and England simultaneously.
6 October	:	All India Congress Committee and the Council of Muslim League met in a joint session at Allahabad and decided to send an all-India deputation to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State in support of Congress-League Scheme.

26 October	:	All India deputation, including Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Tilak, Jinnah and Sapru waited on Chelmsford.
26 November	:	Gandhi met Chelmsford and Montagu.
29 November	:	Champaran Bill introduced in Council, referred to Select Committee.
10 December	:	Appointment of Rowlatt Committee announced.

1918

1 January	:	Gujarat Sabha wrote to Bombay government for exemption or relief from land revenue payments.
12 February	:	Gandhi discussed Kheda situation with Collector and Commissioner.
22 February	:	Ahmedabad mill-owners declared general lock-out.
4 March	:	Bihar and Orissa legislative Council passed Champaran Agrarian Bill.
25 April	:	Viceroy opened war conference in Delhi.
29 April	:	Gandhi spoke at war conference supporting resolution on recruitment.
3 May	:	AICC meeting in Bombay.
8 July	:	Report on Montagu-Chelmsford Constitutional Reforms released.
22 July	:	Gandhi issued second leaflet of appeal for enlistment.
1 August	:	Gandhi's appeal for enlistment in army.
6 August	:	Imperial Conference resolution on India and Dominions.
10 August	:	Gandhi's views on Montford reforms and differences among moderates and extremists.
29 August	:	Special Congress session held in Bombay under the presidentship of Syed Hasan Imam.
31 August	:	Meeting of the Muslim League under the presidentship of Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad.
1 September	:	Special Congress session; accepted resolution on Montford proposals.

4 September	:	Speech of the Viceroy on Montford Reforms in Imperial Legislative Council.
8 September	:	Death of Sir Ratan Tata.
23 September	:	Discussion on Rowlatt Committee Report in Imperial legislative Council.
7 October	:	'Viceroy Day' celebrations in India.
1 November	:	Moderates' Conference in Bombay.
11 November	:	Armistice signed between Allies and Germany.
13 November	:	Appointment of S.P. Sinha to represent India at Peace Conference.
14 November	:	Gandhi's message on *Swadeshi;* advises people to inculcate the spirit of *Swadeshi.*
18 November	:	Gandhi's views on *swaraj:* 'In the proper solution of the Mahomedan question lies the realization of *swaraj.'*
22 November	:	Cancellation of restrictions by government on Tilak's speeches and his movements.
18 December	:	Meeting in London of War Cabinet and representatives of India and Dominions.
20 December	:	Decision of moderates to attend the Congress session.
26 December	:	Twenty-third session of Indian National Congress held in Delhi; Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya presided.

1919

18 January	:	Rowlatt Bills published in *Gazette of India;* first meeting of Peace Conference in Paris.
27 January	:	End of labour strike in Bombay announced.
30 January	:	Efforts for the release of Ali Brothers.
2 February	:	Protest meeting by the Home Rule League, Bombay against the Rowlatt Bills.
6 February	:	Viceroy's inaugural speech in Imperial Legislative Council; Rowlatt Bills introduced.
7 February	:	Debate on Rowlatt Bills in Imperial Legislative Council; Bill referred to select committee against unanimous Indian opposition.

8 February	:	Gandhi's suggestion to Madan Mohan Malaviya for country-wide agitation.
9 February	:	Gandhi's correspondence with V.S. Srinivasa Sastri regarding civil disobedience against Rowlatt Bills.
10 February	:	W. Vincent announced in Imperial Legislative Council that Rowlatt Act was to be in operation for three years; Rowlatt Bill referred to select committee.
20 February	:	Gandhi's letter to Private Secretary to Viceroy for the release of Ali Brothers.
24 February	:	Satyagraha pledge signed at Sabarmati *Ashram* and its information to Viceroy.
26 February	:	Gandhi's advice to Congress volunteers about the *satyagraha.*
1 March	:	Select Committee Report on Rowlatt Bills, dissent of Indian members; *Satyagraha Sabha* formed in Bombay.
2 March	:	Appeal for funds for *satyagraha;*many took *satyagraha* vow in a meeting in Allahabad under the presidentship of Motilal Nehru.
6 March	:	Gandhi met Viceroy.
7 March	:	Protest meeting in Delhi.
11 March	:	*Satyagraha* meeting in Lucknow; supported and signed the pledge.
12 March	:	Debate on Rowlatt Bill in Imperial Legislative Council.
14 March	:	Protest meeting in Bombay attended by Gandhi and Swami Shraddhanand.
18 March	:	Rowlatt Bill passed despite opposition from non-official members; protest meeting in Madras.
21 March	:	Rowlatt Act received Viceroy's assent.
23 March	:	Announcement for observance of 6 April as a day of humiliation and prayer.
30 March	:	Observance of *Satyagraha Day;* riot in Delhi.
31 March	:	Delhi in mourning; military control over the city.

2 April	:	Government of India communique on Delhi disturbances.
6 April	:	*Satyagraha Day* observed all over India; Madan Mohan Malaviya resigned seat in Imperial Legislative Council; Gandhi addressed meetings of Muslims and ladies.
7 April	:	Gandhi's *Satyagrahi* released.
8 April	:	Gandhi on *swadeshi* and Hindu-Muslim unity.
9 April	:	Gandhi served with orders at Kosi restricting his entry into Delhi and Punjab; peaceful processions at Amritsar.
10 April	:	Gandhi placed under arrest and sent to Bombay; arrest and deportations from Amritsar of Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Saifud Din Kitchlew; mob rising and police firing; some Europeans killed; police firing at Lahore.
11 April	:	Country-wide *hartal* continued.
12 April	:	Disturbances in Bombay, Amritsar and other towns; riot and bloodshed in Calcutta.'
13 April	:	Massacre at a mass meeting in the campus of Jallianwala Bagh; Gandhi's message to people.
14 April	:	Hartal and serious disturbances; bombing at Gujranwala; Martial law proclaimed in Punjab, Gandhi's letter to Viceroy on disturbances and disorder in the country; second issue of *Satyagrahi* published.
16 April	:	Arrests at Gujranwala; disturbances at several places.
17 April	:	Deportation of leaders from the Punjab; police firing in Delhi; *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* security forfeited.
18 April	:	Gandhi announced temporary suspension of civil disobedience.
20 April	:	A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay under the presidentship of Madan Mohan Malaviya.
21 April	:	A.I.C.C. resolution on Punjab situation; *Satyagrahi* suspended publication.

24 April	:	Martia! Law Commission began work in Punjab.
26 April	:	B.G. Horniman served with an order to leave India; *The Bombay Chronicle* suspended publication.
28 April	:	Congress deputation left for England.
30 April	:	Gandhi appealed to Sind *satyagrahis* to be calm despite prosecutions.
5 May	:	Gandhi sent *sawadeshi pledge* to Viceroy.
6 May	:	Meeting in Bombay for observance of *hartal.*
8 May	:	Gandhi explains the significance of *satyagraha.*
11 May	:	*Hartal* in Bombay in honour of B.G. Horniman; Annie Besant resigned presidentship of Home Rule League.
13 May	:	Gandhi explained *swadeshi* vows in *Young India.*
26 May	:	Edward Maclagan took over as Lt.-Governor of Punjab.
27 May	:	*The Bombay Chronicle* asked to deposit Rs. 5,000 provisionally.
1 June	:	Rabindranath Tagore renounced Knighthood.
3 June	:	Madan Mohan Malaviya re-elected to Viceregal Council.
9 June	:	Rs. 10,000 as security demanded from *The Bombay Chronicle.*
10 June	:	Martial law withdrawn from the Punjab except from railway lands.
14 June	:	Gandhi wrote to E.S. Montagu justifying movement against Rowlatt legislation.
19 June	:	*Swadeshi Sabha* meeting in Bombay.
26 June	:	A.I.C.C. sent cable to British Prime Minister requesting suspension of sentences by Martial Law Commission pending enquiry.
28 June	:	Treaty of Versailles signed.
4 July	:	Gandhi addressed *Swadeshi Sabha.*

9 July	:	Martial Law Commission delivered judgement in Amritsar Conspiracy Case.
12 July	:	Gandhi met Governor of Bombay.
13 July	:	Home Rule League meeting in Bombay.
20 July	:	A.I.C.C. met in Calcutta.
23 July	:	Sankaran Nair resigned office as member of Viceroy's Council.
4 August	:	Gandhi intends to resume civil disobedience if Rowlatt Act was not appealed.
28 August	:	Deputation led by S.N. Banerjee waited on Montagu to protest against Transvaal Trading Act.
3 September	:	Viceroy announced appointment of Commission to go into question of the Punjab troubles.
6 September	:	Gandhi attended meetings of Swadeshi Sabha and Satyagraha Committee.
21 September	:	Indemnity Bill was passed.
17 October	:	khilafat Day observed all over India.
24 October	:	Gandhi accorded warm reception at Lahore.
29 October	:	Gandhi met Lord Hunter and attended the Punjab Inquiry Committee meeting.
3 November	:	First open session of Punjab Inquiry Committee convened.
11 November	:	Disorders Inquiry Committee arrived at Lahore.
5 December	:	Reforms Bill passed third reading in House of Commons.
24 December	:	Reforms Bill received Royal assent.
29 December	:	Session of the Indian National Congress at Amritsar. Pandit Motilal Nehru presided.
30 December	:	Gandhi moved resolution at Indian National Congress session on Punjab and Gujarat disturbances.

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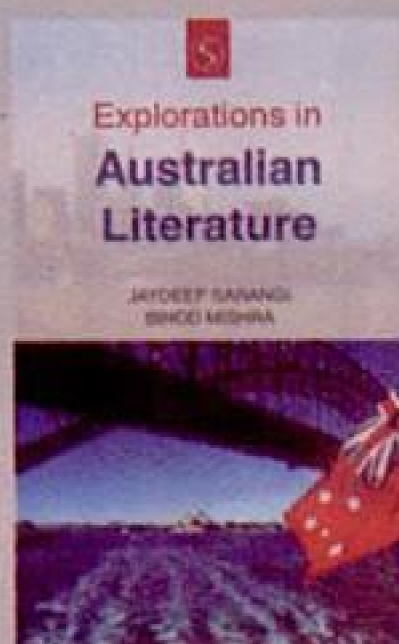
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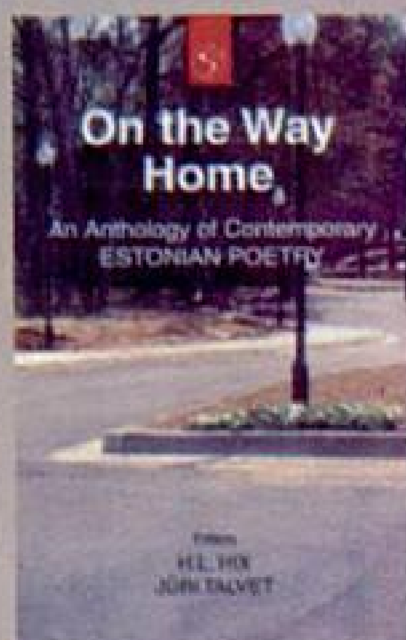
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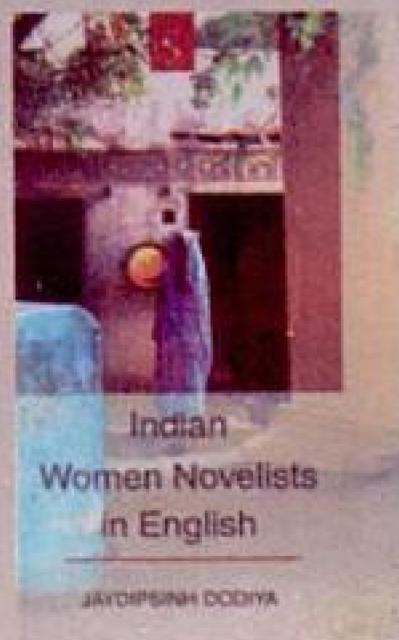
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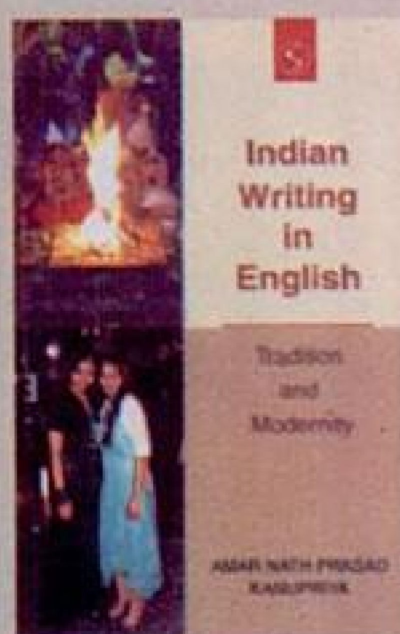
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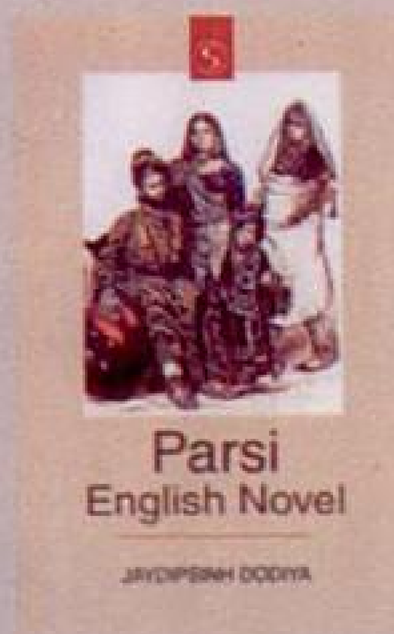
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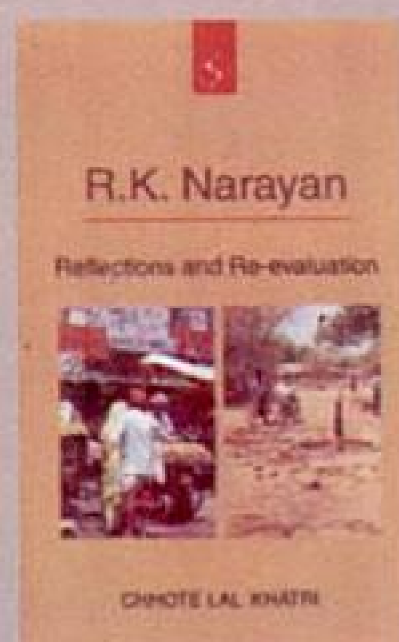














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